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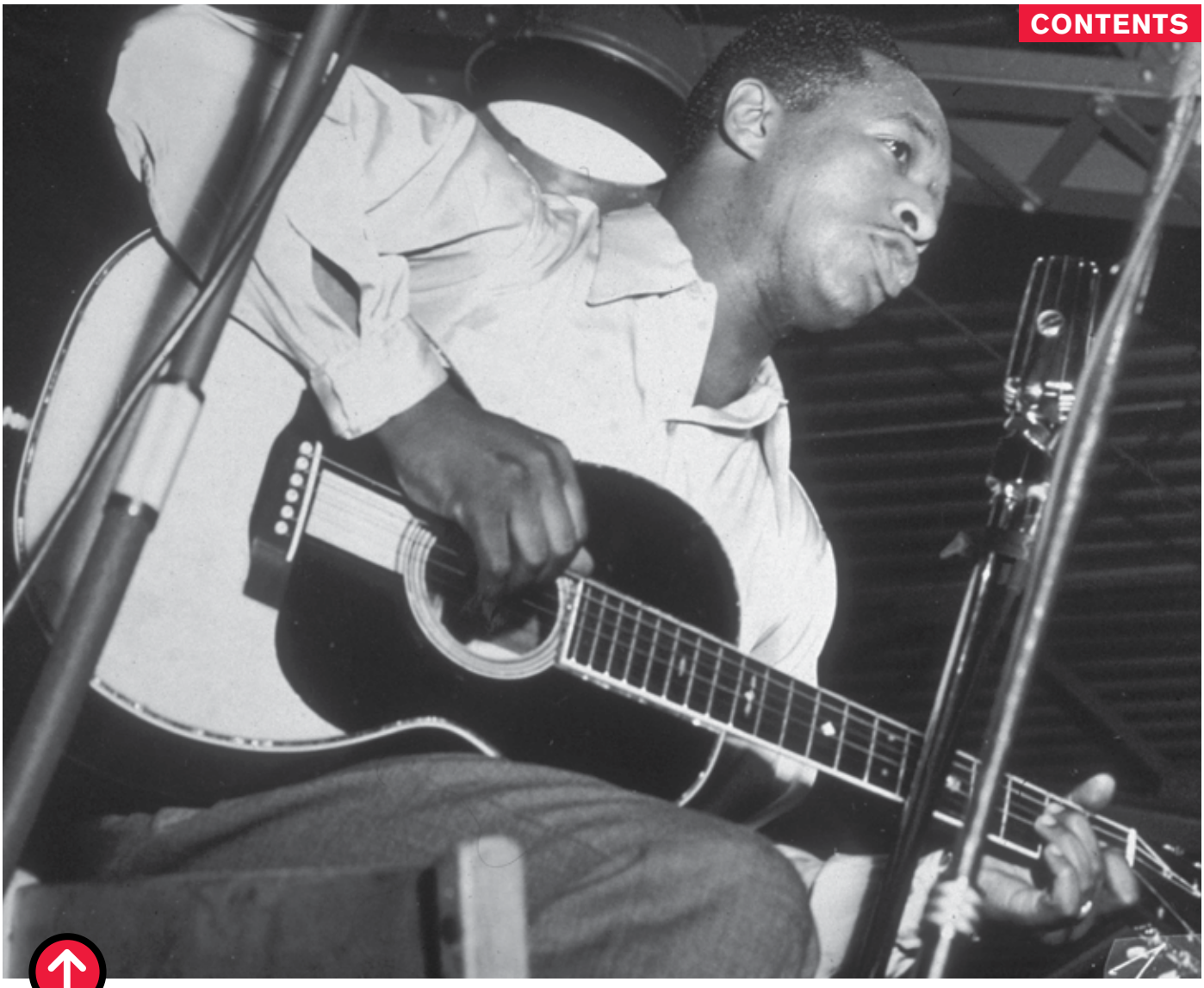
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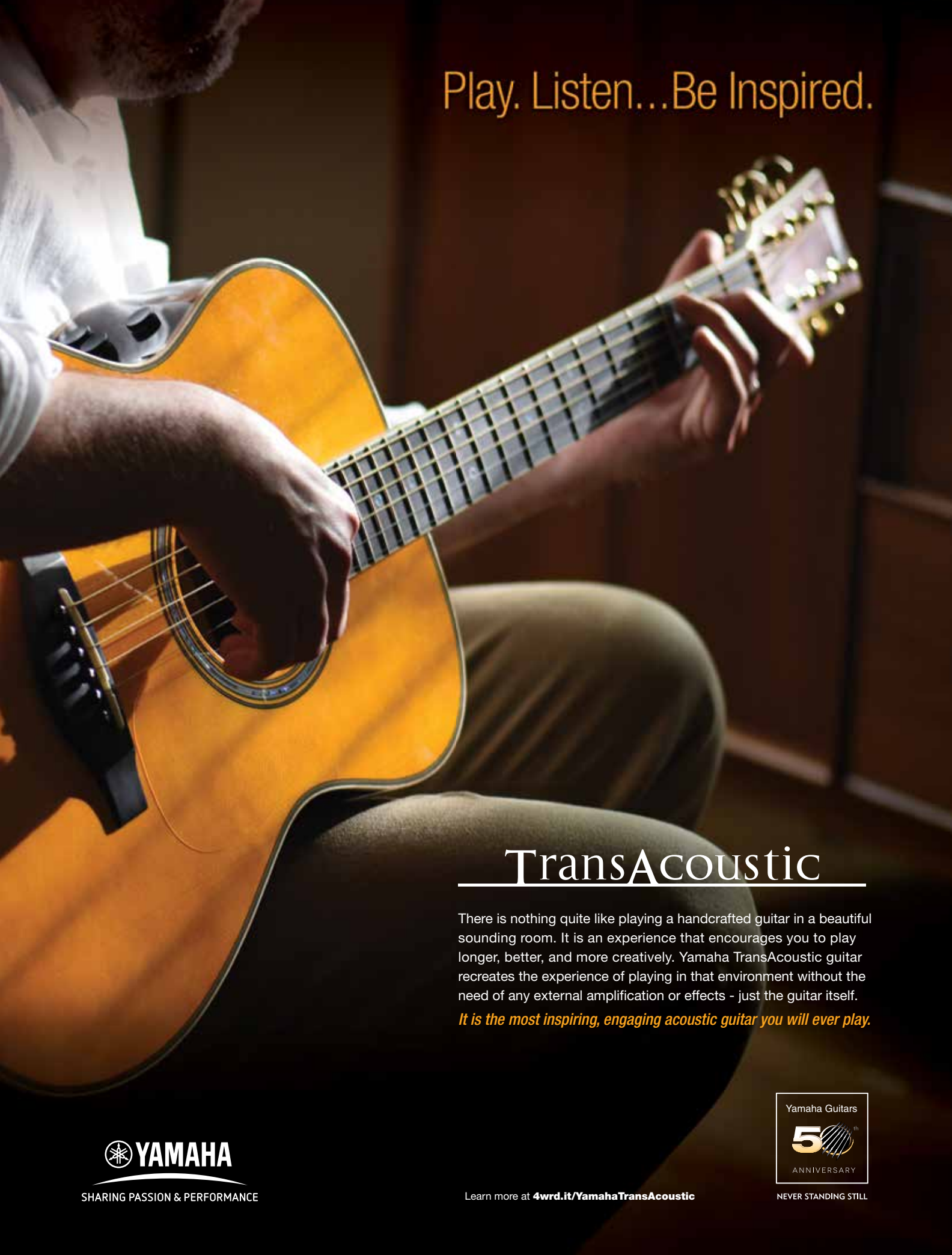
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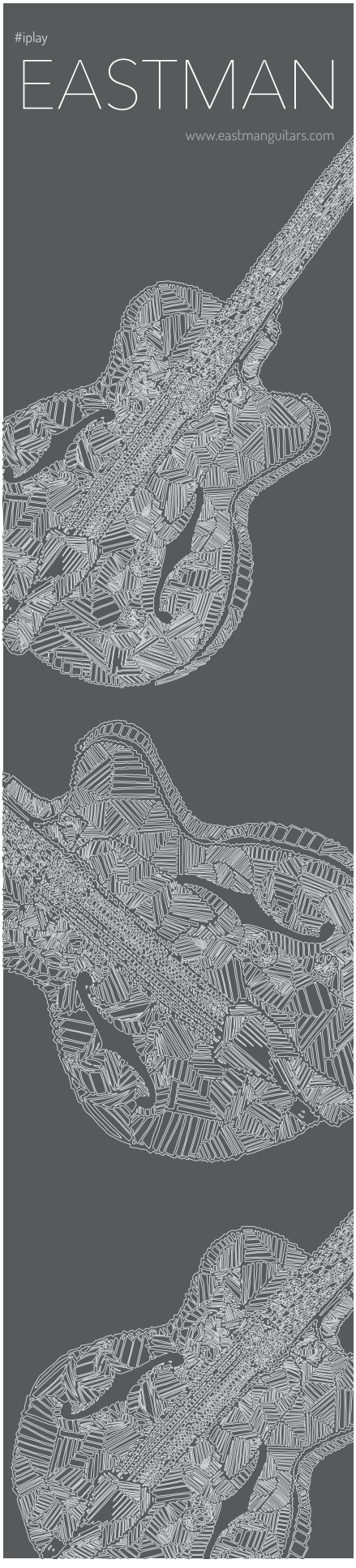
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MANDY FER
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BRYAN ALLEN

'When I was starting out in my early genre-less career, no one was doing what I was doing, and the music industry didn't know what to do with me. They'd ask "What kind of music do you play," and I couldn't really answer. There wasn't a path for me in the industry, so I created my own.'
–MURIEL ANDERSON, p. 30

Riding down an escalator three years ago at the cavernous Anaheim Convention Center at the Winter NAMM musical-instrument trade show, it dawned on me that the marketing directors at most of the biggest guitar companies were women. And, after meeting with most of them, I realized they had all discussed a common challenge: How could they sell more guitars to women? One marketing director had pondered the practicality of hosting whiskey and guitar parties, in the spirit of Tupperware parties, as a way to introduce guitars to women—a concept fraught with potential insurance liabilities. There's no question that the guitar world, especially the electric side, is dominated by male players. But while there are many women folk artists, singer-songwriters, Americana duo partners, and the like, there aren't a lot of female acoustic guitarists in the vein of Nancy Wilson, Kaki King, or Muriel Anderson.

Why don't more women play the guitar?

That's a difficult question to answer: Perhaps it's due to the lack of role models. Or the brisk approach some male teachers take with female students. Or some gender bias that lingers in the recording and booking sectors. And then there's the male-dominated lutherie world, where at those sprawling custom-guitar showcases you can count the number of female guitar builders on one hand. Yet, there are indications that the times are changing: Regular trips to my local guitar stores show an increasing number of young women trekking to instructors with guitar case in hand; certainly the classical-guitar scene is well populated by female players; and the burgeoning ukulele kingdom, with its network of welcoming clubs and vibrant social setting, is drawing many women to explore the joys of fretted, acoustic instruments.

So, why don't more women play guitar?

I don't have the answer. But in the Women, Guitars, and Success special section, in conjunction with Women's History Month, *AG* asks 14 female players, makers, and educators to share their passion for guitar and discuss the obstacles they've overcome in their careers. Their compelling stories capture their committment to art and convey an overarching theme: Pursue your dream with heart and soul. Also, in that section, you'll find an insightful interview with folk legend Buffy Sainte-Marie, who discusses the challenges she's faced as an activist who's brought the conviction of her beliefs to her powerful songs. It's a remarkable interview that resonates in these remarkable times.

Play on.

—Greg Cahill

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SETUP



Taj Mahal

JAY BLAKESBERG

GUITAR TALK

Shades of Blue

Taj Mahal still paints the blues with a rich acoustic palette

BY ANDY HUGHES

Henry Saint Clair Fredericks, Jr., better known as Taj Mahal, has been a groundbreaking explorer of acoustic blues since the 1950s. His recordings have ranged from Delta blues to Piedmont-style blues to Hawaiian to pop. A resident of the San Francisco Bay Area, he is a living repository of the blues who remains popular on the festival and club circuit. He is recording a new as-yet-untitled album. Acoustic Guitar *British correspondent Andy Hughes enjoyed an afternoon of conversation with the guitarist after the bluesman played a set at the 2016 Montreal Jazz Festival.*

Do you play guitar every day?

Not every day. I usually have my eight-string ukulele with me in my hotel room, and I will sit and pick that when I am in the mood. My guitars are stored in the hold of the tour bus, but if ever I wanted to get one out and play, they are there for me. I do [listen to] a large amount of music on my computer; one of my daughters [Deva Mahal] has just released a new song, so I was listening to that this morning. Sometimes I play music all the time, sometimes I don't. I guess that is the same for most musicians.

You started with an electric blues band, but you played an acoustic guitar. Is that because you felt the blues was properly rooted in acoustic guitar?

I did play acoustic with an electric band back in the 1950s, and I did feel that the acoustic guitar was the proper connection to the origins of African music. Of course, now they have figured out how to amplify acoustic guitars without losing any of the quality and feel of the sound. They manage to get the tone of the guitar coming through, which is what I love. Myself, I hardly ever play the

electric guitar at home, or when I am by myself out on the road in hotels or wherever. I mostly play acoustic instruments.

I'm not sure that the acoustic is actually the final be-all and end-all of playing blues music. If you have everything there, the feel and the emotion, that's what matters. If you are hearing Elmore James playing "It Hurts Me Too," I don't care if he is playing an old harp guitar, or whatever—that's the sound, the emotion, that's what it is. He is playing the music, and he's playing the spaces between the music.



When you play your acoustic, you pluck with just your middle finger. How did that evolve?
Well, the truth is, I started out trying to learn to play with four fingers, and after a while, I said to myself, what does the music sound like? Does it sound right? Because that is really the only important thing that I need to be worrying about. So I didn't spend a lot of time worrying about playing with what people may have thought of as the *right* way to play. I guess maybe if I had spent a bunch more time practicing it, I could have broken myself of the habit of playing with one finger, but to be honest, it just never happened. The same thing applies to playing with finger picks and flat picks. I got the hang of flat picks eventually, but it took me a lot of years. I probably would have mastered finger picks and thumb picks if I had learned to play a lot of lap steel and Weissenbourn and all that stuff, because you need the picks to get the right sound out of those instruments. But I never really pursued those styles, so I guess it just didn't really matter to me too much.

When you perform live, do you like to have pickups or a series of microphones?
How it works for me is, I go to Subway Guitars in Berkeley. A guy called Fatdog runs that store, and he and his guys are really good craftsmen, and they set up my acoustics the way I like them, and they have gotten my amps to sound how I like as well. So those guys do that, and my sound engineer has done a couple of tricks on the banjos that I use, and I buy ukuleles from the factory, and they have the pickups already wired in, so they get the tone coming through as well. The thing is, I want to be able to feel the vibration of the acoustic guitar while I am playing it. I don't want just the sound; I need to be able to feel it coming through at the same time.

What about in the studio?
Pretty much the same thing there. I like a pickup straight into the desk to make sure we get all the full sound from the instrument, but I also like different acoustic mics placed around to get the ambiance and the feel. A pickup will get you the sounds of the strings, but an external mic will get the sound of the wood and the air, and those things all add to the final sound on the record.

Do you play the same acoustic guitars on the road as you do in the studio?
Well, some of the older National Dobros, I keep them at home these days. They don't travel that well, so I make sure they don't travel that much. The electric I use has a 1960s Howard Roberts body—round hole with a cutaway, and a Danelectro neck and a Bill Lawrence pickup and one volume control, and that's the guitar I will play with anyone who plays any kinda music. I have a French acoustic guitar that has nylon strings and a cutaway body. I can't remember the name of the luthier who made that one; it plugs in and has a wonderful tone. I also have a Ben Harper model Martin, and a Fairbanks White Lady copy banjo, and an eight-string ukulele. As well as those, I have a Recording King Tricone, which has a metal body. They are what go out on the road with me.

You have an individual acoustic style and sound and tone. What do you think creates that?
I don't know . . . honestly, that's the truth, because I don't hear what you hear. I can only hear playbacks of what I do, when I am playing, I am behind the guitar playing it, and I have no idea what people hear out front when they listen to it. Everyone is individual, everyone hears something different, so I really have no idea if what I do sounds special or different. This is what I like, and this is how I play it, that's my approach.

Do you have an acoustic guitar whose sound appeals to you more than the rest, or do you like them all equally?
No, not equally, but I think I like different models for different sounds and different atmospheres. If I am playing Delta blues, which has a more percussive and attacking style, then the Nationals play that sound well. I like to dig in with the Tricones, but the thing is, you can get a gentle mellow tone out of those guitars as well. For me, if the guitar is balanced, and is set up the way I like it, then I can play pretty much everything I play for a set on that one guitar. I usually start out on the Recording King, and I will play five or six songs on that. Even if I am going to play the following song and it's in the same key as the one I have just finished, I will still change the guitar to get a different feel going. That's what keeps it interesting, not just for me, but for the audience as well. I also like to keep my hands open with the feel of different guitars through a concert. It's like painting a house, you're not going to paint the whole thing with just one pot of paint—roof, walls, windows, floors—you are going to change it up a little, vary things to keep them feeling fresh. **AG**


Pegi Young

JAY BLAKESBERG

Raw & Renewed

Post-divorce, Pegi Young turns to songwriting as catharsis

BY CRISTINA SCHREIL

After performing at the 2015 Stagecoach Festival, **Pegi Young** holed up in her hotel room, feeling inspired. With two members of her band the Survivors—guitarist **Kelvin Holly** and keyboardist/Muscle Shoals songwriter **Spooner Oldham**—Young began laying the foundation of *Raw* (Baltimore Thrush), her fifth album and first since her 2014 split from her husband of 36 years, **Neil Young**. The album is set for a Feb. 17 release.

Phoning from her Northern California ranch, Young says this "was a particularly cathartic record because writing was my go-to. I just had to write, you know? I had such a large stack of lyrics." For the first time, Young doesn't play guitar on this album. "I didn't pick up my guitar for a good long while," she says, adding that it took time to "get unfrozen."

Holly supplied the acoustic-guitar playing on *Raw*, while Young focused on startling and autobiographical lyrics. In the opening track "Why," she sings, "Why'd you have to ruin my life?" In "Gave My Best to You," she declares, "I gave you over half of my life / But I'm getting stronger every day."

"Heartbreak is a universal experience. I'm not the only person who's gone through this. I'm not the last person who's going to go through this," Young says. "The [lyrics] come from me, but they're not all just about me."

She says the songs encapsulate multiple stages of grief, including loss and growth. The album's closer, a cover of **Don Henley**'s "The Heart of the Matter," lends a sense of healing and moving on. An appreciation for music of the '50s and '60s informs *Raw*'s seven originals and five covers, which also include Otis Clay's "Trying to Live My Life Without You," **Randy Vanwarmer**'s "Just When I Needed You Most," Ray Charles' "Do I Ever Cross Your Mind," and Nancy Sinatra's "These Boots Are Made for Walkin'."

Wrapping up *Raw* coincided with the 30th anniversary of the Bridge School Benefit Concert, an all-acoustic charity event she established after her and Neil's son Ben was born with cerebral palsy. Young credits her ex-husband for making the concert acoustic and stresses that it creates a special environment, in which musicians feel free to stretch out artistically. Over the years, it has featured unplugged performances by Bruce Springsteen, Norah Jones, CSN&Y, Heart, My Morning Jacket, Pearl Jam, and many others.

Young herself has returned to playing her **Martin OMCPA4** named "Mabel," and says she's penning more lighthearted songs—and a memoir.



TOMMY EMMANUEL SELLS GUITARS FOR CHARITY

In November, Australian fingerstylist **Tommy Emmanuel** partnered with reverb.com to sell 29 guitars (flattops, archtops, and electrics) and four amps from his personal collection to raise money for charities. Called the Official Tommy Emmanuel Reverb Shop, nearly all of the acclaimed guitarist's gear sold within 24 hours of posting, and raised more than $70,000 for **Guitars for Vets**, **MusiCares**, and **Doctors Without Borders**. Among the acoustic guitars that Emmanuel sold was a **Martin 000-28VS** ($3,600) he calls his "pay-it-forward," which he bought from a friend of **Muriel Anderson**'s who needed funds for cancer treatments. Also sold was an extremely rare **Gibson Bossa Nova** ($3,000), of which only five were ever made. Emmanuel's was purchased at Cotten's Music Center in Nashville, and was built in the early 1970s as a prototype for **Jerry Reed**. Other acoustic guitars from the collection included a **Paul Reed Smith** Prototype #15 with cutaway ($10,000), a 1996 **Christopher Melville J/IR/P** with an exaggerated OM body and intricate rose inlay ($6,999), and a **John Perkins Macassar Custom**, ($5,000). View the entire collection online at reverb.com. *—Anna Pulley*

JANIS IAN DONATES D'AQUISTO TO D'ADDARIO FOUNDATION

Janis Ian recently donated her custom-made **D'Aquisto** "Spring Song" acoustic guitar, the sale of which will benefit the **D'Addario Foundation**, which supports music education programs in primarily underprivileged areas. The renowned singer-songwriter ordered the guitar in 1978, and it was completed in 1981. The "Spring Song"—a custom James D'Aquisto flattop (one of 16 ever made) and the only D'Aquisto constructed with this particular body shape and size—is 15-inches wide, featuring a spruce top and maple back, sides, and neck. It has been used on 13 of Ian's albums and played on countless tours. In addition to donating this instrument, Ian's Pearl Foundation has raised and provided nearly $1 million in funding for scholarships. *—A.P.*



MARINA CHAVEZ

JOAN BAEZ TO BE INDUCTED INTO ROCK & ROLL HALL OF FAME

Joan Baez is one of six recipients who will be inducted into the **Rock & Roll Hall of Fame** in 2017. The acoustic troubadour and icon is the only woman to receive the honor this year, and the third woman to be inducted over the last four ceremonies. (The last two recipients were **Linda Ronstadt** in 2014 and **Joan Jett** in 2015.) Along with Baez, the other musicians who will be awarded at the 32nd annual induction ceremony—which takes place April 7 in Brooklyn and will be televised on HBO and broadcast on SiriusXM—include Pearl Jam, Tupac Shakur, Journey, Yes, and Electric Light Orchestra. Plus, Chic's Nile Rodgers will be given the Award for Musical Excellence.

"I never considered myself to be a rock and roll artist," Baez says, in a statement. "But as part of the folk music boom which contributed to and influenced the rock revolution of the '60s, I am proud that some of the songs I sang made their way into the rock lexicon. I very much appreciate this honor and acknowledgement by the Hall of Fame." Read more about Baez's legacy as an acoustic guitarist in a special section on p. 41. —*A.P.*

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FOLK CRUSADER

Josh White redefined American music and American justice

BY ADAM LEVY



Can you name the first African-American artist to have a million-selling record? No, it wasn't Paul Robeson, Louis Armstrong, or Sam Cooke—though these men also sold plenty of records in their time. The first to achieve this landmark was Josh White, a charismatic and immensely popular folksinger who recorded and performed in the United States and abroad, from the late 1920s until his untimely death in 1969 at age 45. His million-seller was "One Meat Ball," released in 1944. This influential recording has been covered numerous times by pop singers of White's day, including Bing Crosby and the Andrews Sisters, as well as by such folksy guitar men as Ry Cooder, Dave Van Ronk, and White's son Josh White, Jr. The senior White had several more hits throughout his career, including "The House of the Rising Sun," "Careless Love," and "St. James Infirmary."

"One Meat Ball" can be heard on a new audiophile-quality vinyl reissue of 1956's *Josh at Midnight* (Ramseur).

Born in Greenville, South Carolina, White sang in the church and became proficient in the Piedmont style of acoustic country blues. He also became intimately familiar with the cruelty of the South's Jim Crow laws: After ejecting a white bill collector from his house, White's father was beaten severely and incarcerated in a mental institution. Two months after his father's arrest, White left home to serve as a guide for a local black street singer named Blind Man Arnold. He later did the same chores for blues great Blind Blake and Blind Jake Taggart, helping the men busk and working for tips. The job provided tutelage for the aspiring then-teen musician.
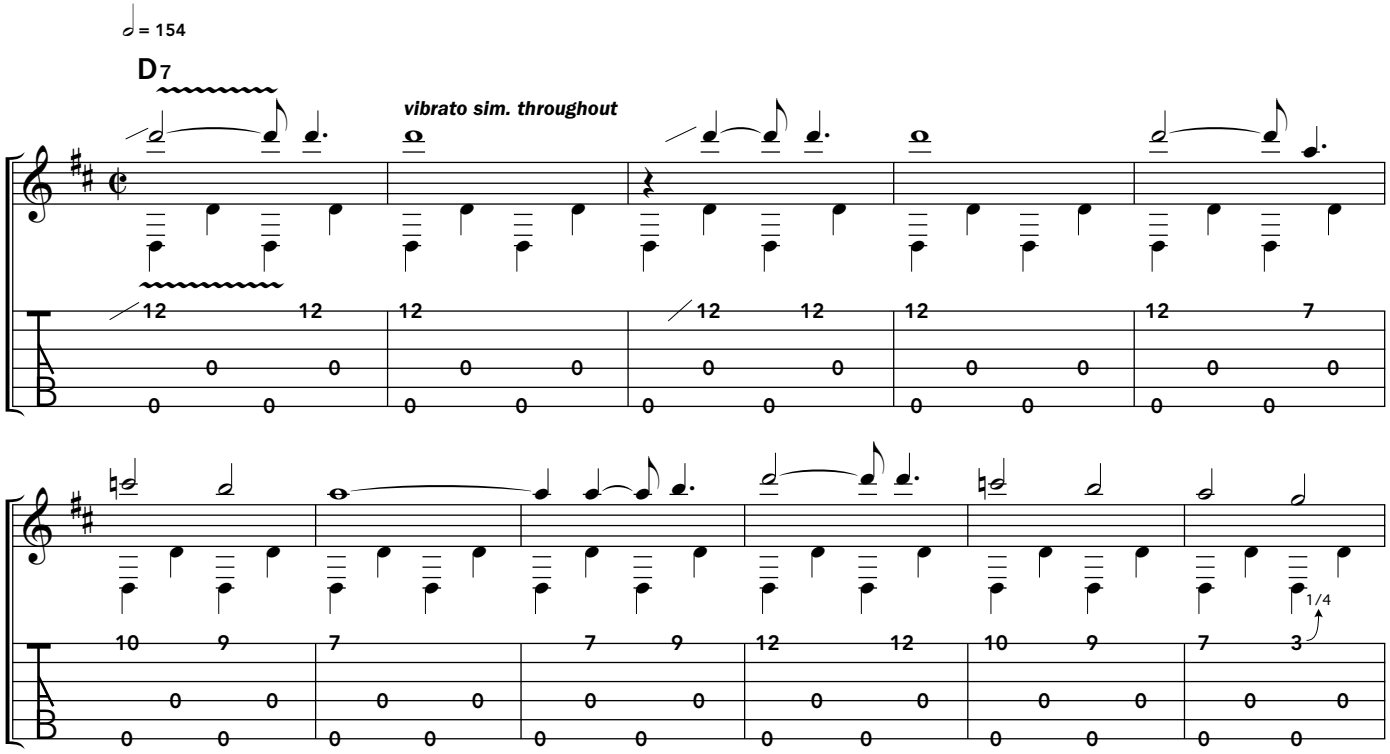
Throughout the 1940s, White was a featured performer at the storied Café Society. Located in the Greenwich Village quarter of New York City, Café Society was an integrated nightclub—the first of its kind in America. Over time, as White was exposed to new audiences and to other performers there, his musical range grew to include all sorts of traditional and contemporary songs, including blues, folk, gospel, musical theater, and ballads. On *Josh White Sings Ballads & Blues* (Elektra), from 1957, the repertoire includes jazz-tinged numbers, such as "Gloomy Sunday" (originally popularized in the early '40s by singer Billie Holiday) and "Miss Otis Regrets" (a Cole Porter song, recorded by the Mills Brothers, Ella Fitzgerald, and numerous others).

White was more than just an interpreter of songs. He was an actor—working on radio shows, on Broadway stages, and on the silver screen. He also was a civil-rights activist, taking a strong stance against segregation and other injustices in his songs and his deeds. In 1940, White performed at the US Library of Congress to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the 13th Amendment, which formally abolished slavery in the United States. A longtime friend to President Franklin D. and First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, White eventually became an enemy of Sen. Joseph McCarthy, who in 1950 launched a series of bitter Communist witch hunts under the auspices of a Senate investigative panel. As such, he was blacklisted in the 1950s, which kept him off of television and put a damper on his career just as his success and popularity were peaking. The embargo finally ended in '63, when President John F. Kennedy personally invited White to appear at his Dinner with the President gala, which was broadcast nationally on CBS television.

A deft fingerstyle guitarist with a knack for crafting layered parts, White was a wonderful accompanist for his own zestful singing style. While his playing wasn't overly complex, it went well beyond folk-guitar basics. He'd often use his thumb to play a bass line while his fingers worked as a team to strum or arpeggiate the upper chord tones. He sometimes played as a duo with an upright bassist (as on *Josh at Midnight*), or as a trio with bass and light drums (as on *Josh White Sings Ballads & Blues*).

Ex. 1 (in the style of 'John Henry')

Tuning: D A D F♯ A D



White favored a few different guitars throughout his career, though he was most frequently photographed playing a Martin 00-21. Towards the end of White's life, Guild was working on a signature guitar for him. And Ovation produced a Josh White model in the mid-1960s—Ovation's first artist-signature model and the first such ever created for an African-American artist.

White's blues guitar style is noteworthy. Here are some examples that can help you dig into the musical world of singer-songwriter and guitarist Josh White.

STEEL-DRIVING RHYTHM
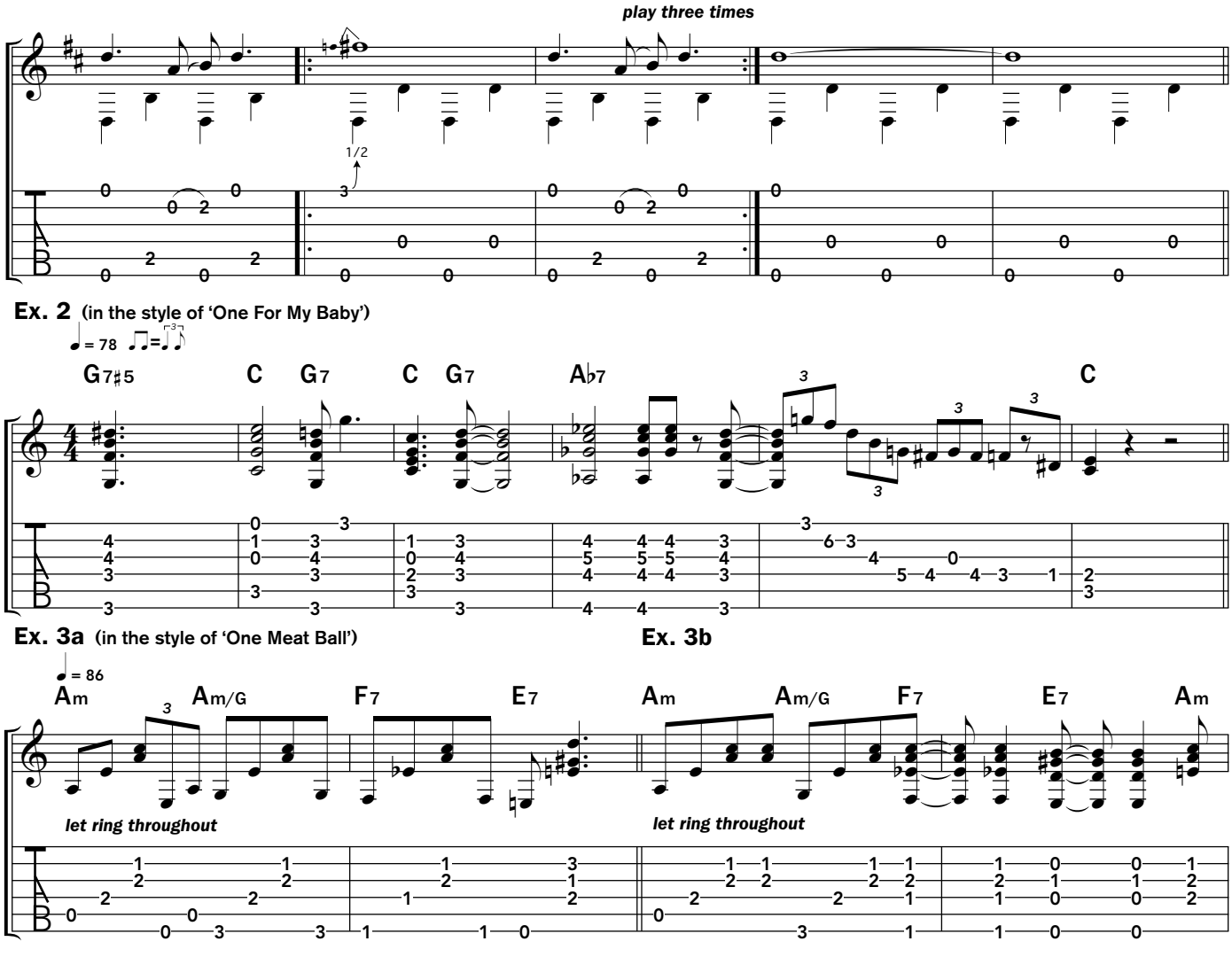
Ex. 1 is inspired by White's mid-1940s recording of "John Henry" from *Ballads and Blues* (not to be confused with the subsequent *Josh White Sings Ballads & Blues*). Though White most often played in standard tuning, this particular example is in open D (D A D F♯ A D, low to high). The melodic theme is played almost entirely on the first string, while an alternating-bass figure thrums below. This approach, technically, seems inspired by the work of slide guitarists. What's more, White's wide wiggle on the sustained melody notes closely approximates the sort of vibrato favored by bottleneck players (perhaps White had heard Furry Lewis' kinetic recording of this song from the 1920s, played with slide, in open tuning). Your thumb is responsible for all of the bass notes (downward stems). Play the melody (upward stems) with your fingers—whichever digits feel most comfortable. Work up to White's brisk tempo gradually, using a metronome (or metronome app) to keep you honest.

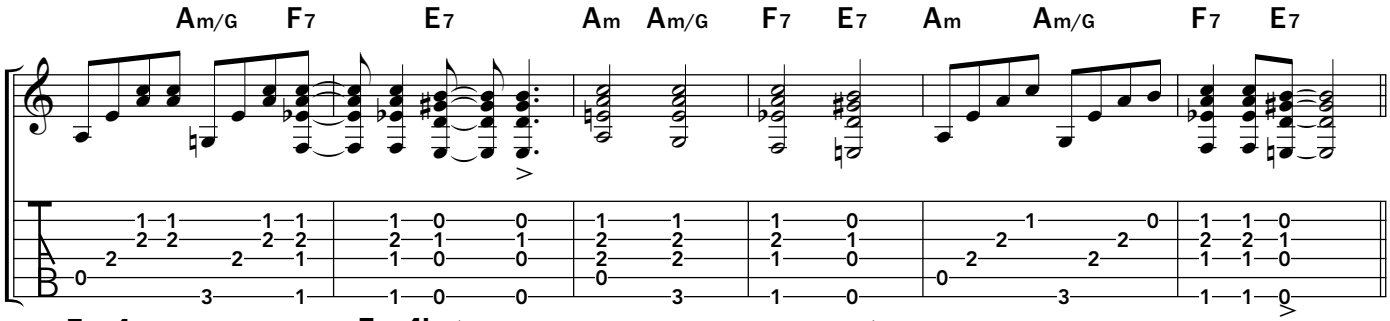
. . . he was blacklisted in the 1950s, which kept him off of television and put a damper on his career just as his success and popularity were peaking.

SET 'EM UP, JOSH

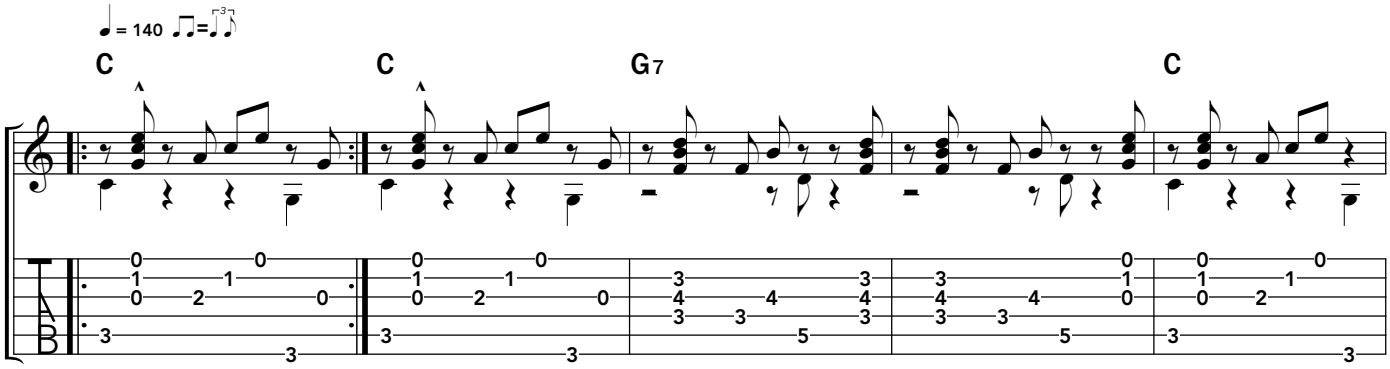
"One for My Baby (and One More for the Road)" is best known as a "saloon song," popularized by Frank Sinatra in the 1950s. White's rendering (from *Josh White Sings Ballads & Blues*) is less likely to be found in the jukebox of your local watering hole, but is just as distinctive as Sinatra's hit version. **Ex. 2** is a nod to White's "One for My Baby," which the guitarist played with a capo at the first fret. Once again, your thumb plays the bass notes (downward stems) and your fingers grab the upstemmed notes.

To play the dominant-seventh chords as White did, wrap your thumb all the way over the back of the neck to catch the bass notes on the sixth string, bar your first finger across

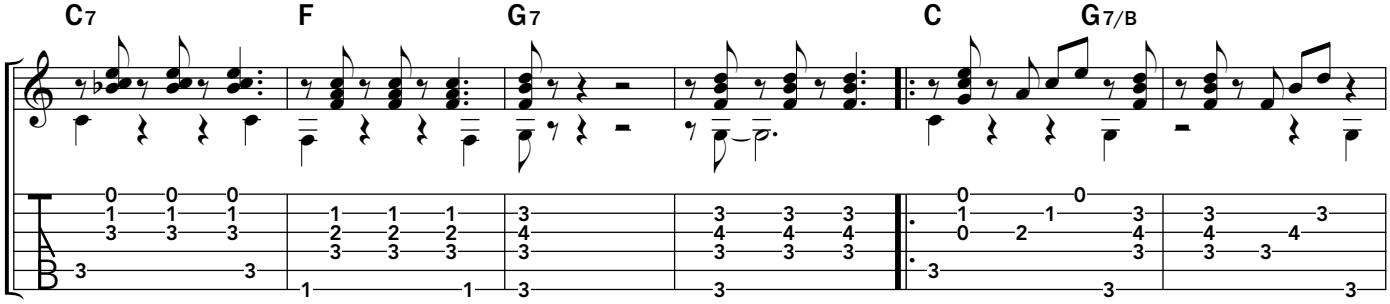




Ex. 4a **Ex. 4b** (in the style of 'Apples, Peaches & Cherries')

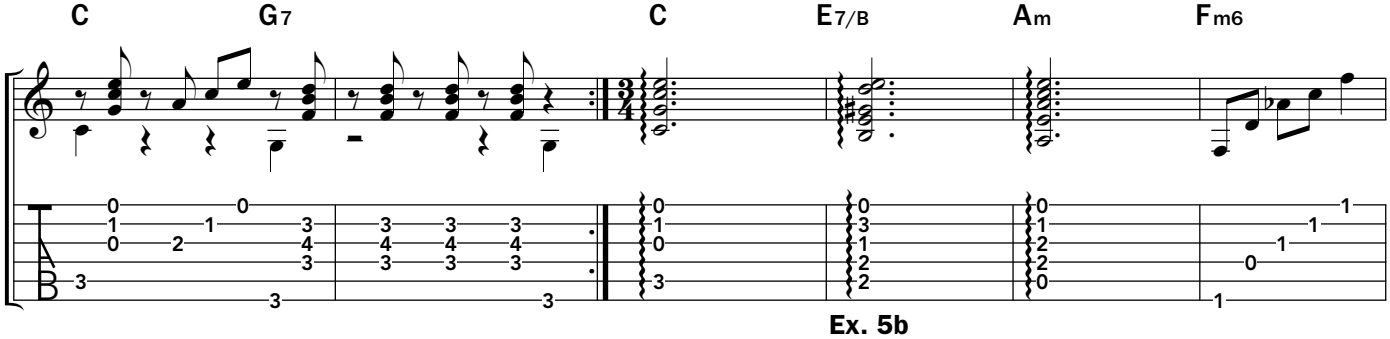


Ex. 4c

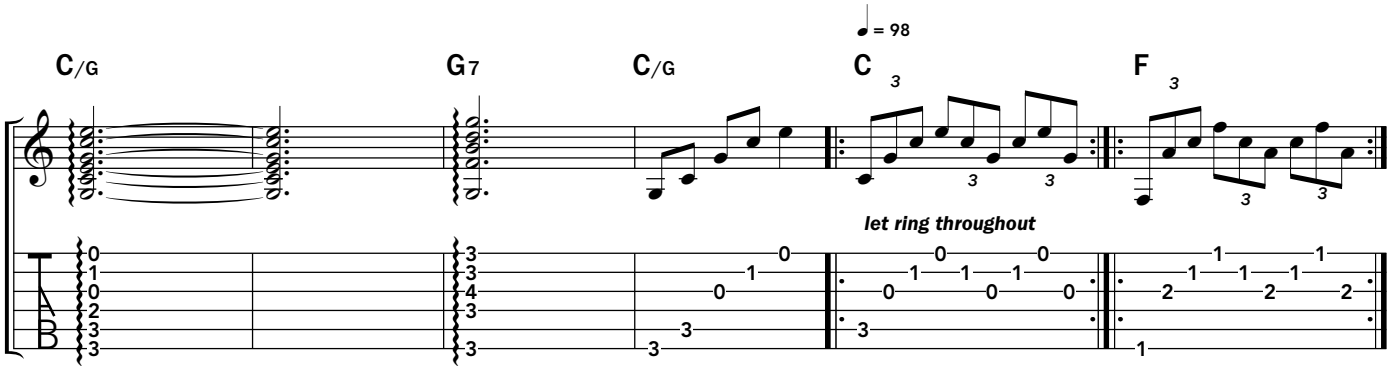


Ex. 5a (in the style of 'Waltzing Matilda')

Freely, briskly



Ex. 5b



strings 1–4, and fret the third string with your second finger. (If you find this thumb position absolutely impossible, the seventh chords can be played as standard barre chords.)

MEATY MANEUVERS

"One Meat Ball" was White's first huge hit. The song's theatrical lyric is tragicomic, telling the tale of a poor man who goes to eat at a restaurant, but can only afford a single meatball. The dark side of the story is foreshadowed by White's brooding intro vamp—which **Ex. 3a** is fashioned after. Play the root of the F7 with your thumb, if possible.

Ex. 3b is similar to what White played in the chorus sections of "One Meat Ball." These moves aren't all that different from Ex. 3a. There's simply more rhythmic variety here—due, largely, to the way White would bolster the song's vocal cadences with his guitar. (Note that White used a capo at the fifth fret, so that F7 was actually a B♭7.)

JUICY FRUIT

White first recorded "Apples, Peaches, and Cherries" in 1947. The playful song—which he performed with a buoyant calypso feel—remained a staple of his repertoire for years to come. He included it in his 1962 concert performance for Swedish national television (easy to find on YouTube, as of this writing.) **Ex. 4a–4c** are all inspired by the Swedish broadcast version of



A deft fingerstyle guitarist with a knack for crafting layered parts, Josh White was a wonderful accompanist for his own zestful singing style.

"Apples, Peaches, and Cherries," for which White used a first-fret capo.

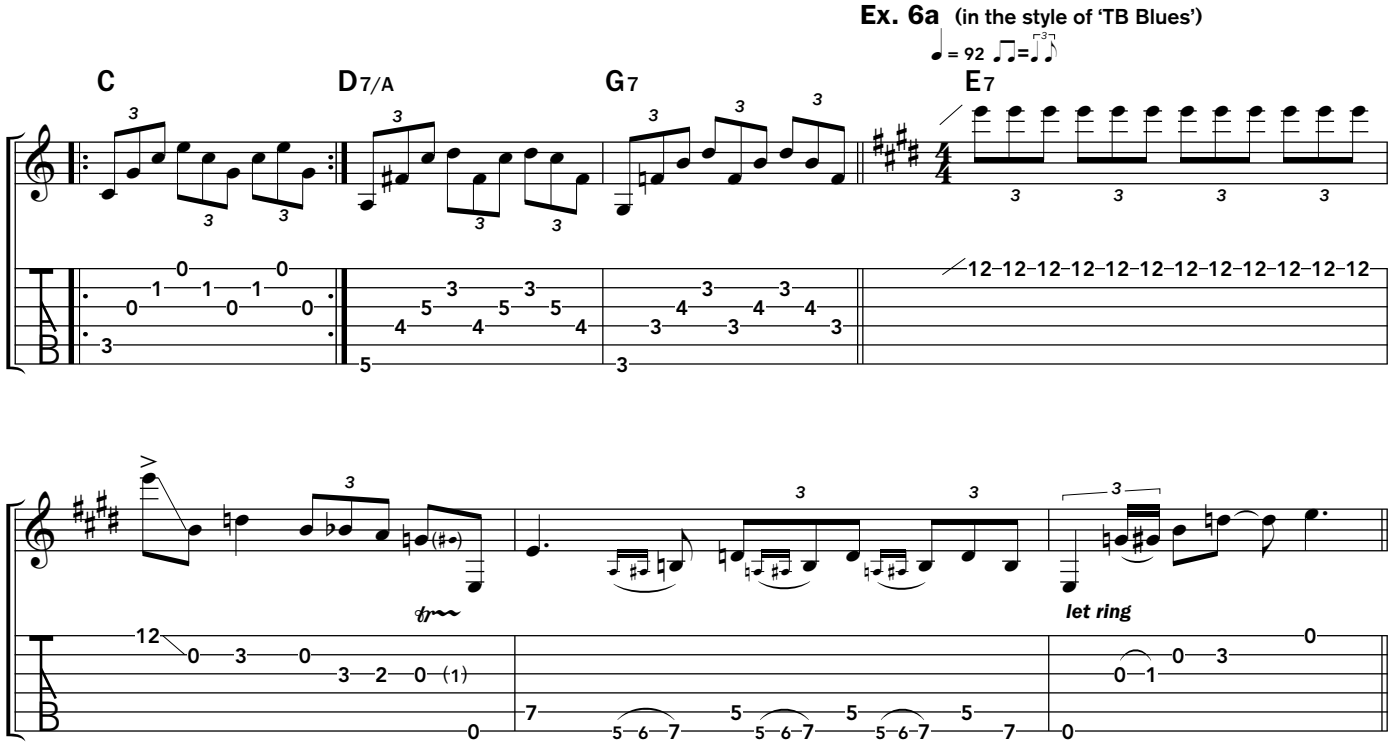
Ex. 4a is not unlike White's opening vamp for the song. Make sure to emphasize the chord on the *and* of beat one (marked as marcato in the music manuscript). This particular syncopation is key to nailing White's feel. Ex. 4b is similar to the guitar part White played for the verses of this song. Here, as in the previous examples, wrap your thumb over the neck to play the bass notes of the dominant-seventh chords. In bars 2 and 3, bring your fourth finger up just in time to catch the offbeat D notes. Ex. 4c approximates White's guitar part for the chorus sections of "Apples, Peaches, and Cherries."

TWO SIDES OF THE SAME WALTZ

In 1944, White recorded the Australian folk ballad "Waltzing Matilda." The song alternates between verse and chorus sections, which White treated quite differently. In the verses, he generally brushed his thumb across the strings, from low to high, for each new chord. **Ex. 5a** intended to be played this way. The technique is simple, yet effective. (You may also try thumbing the lowest note in each chord and grabbing the remainder of the voicing with your fingers, as he sometimes did as well.) White took a similar approach when playing other ballads in free time as well. You can hear—and see—as much in his version of "Danny Boy," as performed for Swedish TV in '62.

In the chorus sections of "Waltzing Matilda," however, White arpeggiated the chords in steady time. **Ex. 5b** is not unlike White's chorus treatment. The unusual arpeggio pattern here continues steadily throughout this example, except in the final two bars,

Ex. 6a (in the style of 'TB Blues')



where a different pattern comes into play. Note that, as he did with other songs, White used a capo at the first fret on the original recording.

THE REAL FOLK BLUES

While White is known more as a folk musician than a bluesman, his performing and recording repertoire featured many blues songs—"Betty and Dupree" (titled, simply, "Dupree" on some collections), "Well, Well, Well" (an alternate title to "Jesus Gonna Make Up My Dyin' Bed"), "TB Blues," and others. **Examples 6a** through **6c** are modeled upon White's rendition of "TB Blues."

In Ex. 6a—similar to White's "TB Blues" intro—slide up to the 12th-fret high E in bar 1. These sorts of moves, in White's hands, were dramatic. He most often played a 12-fret Martin 00-21, which made such slides relatively easy to nail, as the intersection of the guitar's neck and body would stop his rocketing hand at just the right spot.

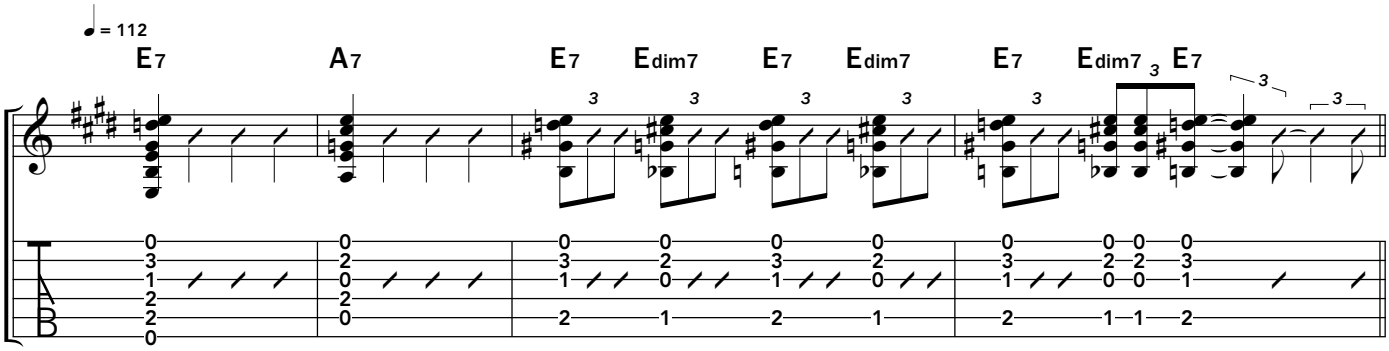
Once White got past the intro and into the cycling 12-bar form of "TB Blues," he employed a couple of different maneuvers to drive the music forward. Ex. 6b illustrates how he sometimes alternated between E7 and Edim7 to build harmonic tension while playing a triplet figure to amp up the rhythm.

Finally, in Ex. 6c, you can see how White would sometimes let the chords go entirely and lean into a grooving bass figure. Alternating between lone bass lines and full-voiced chords, he was able to suggest the energy of a band, even in solo performances, as he most frequently was heard.

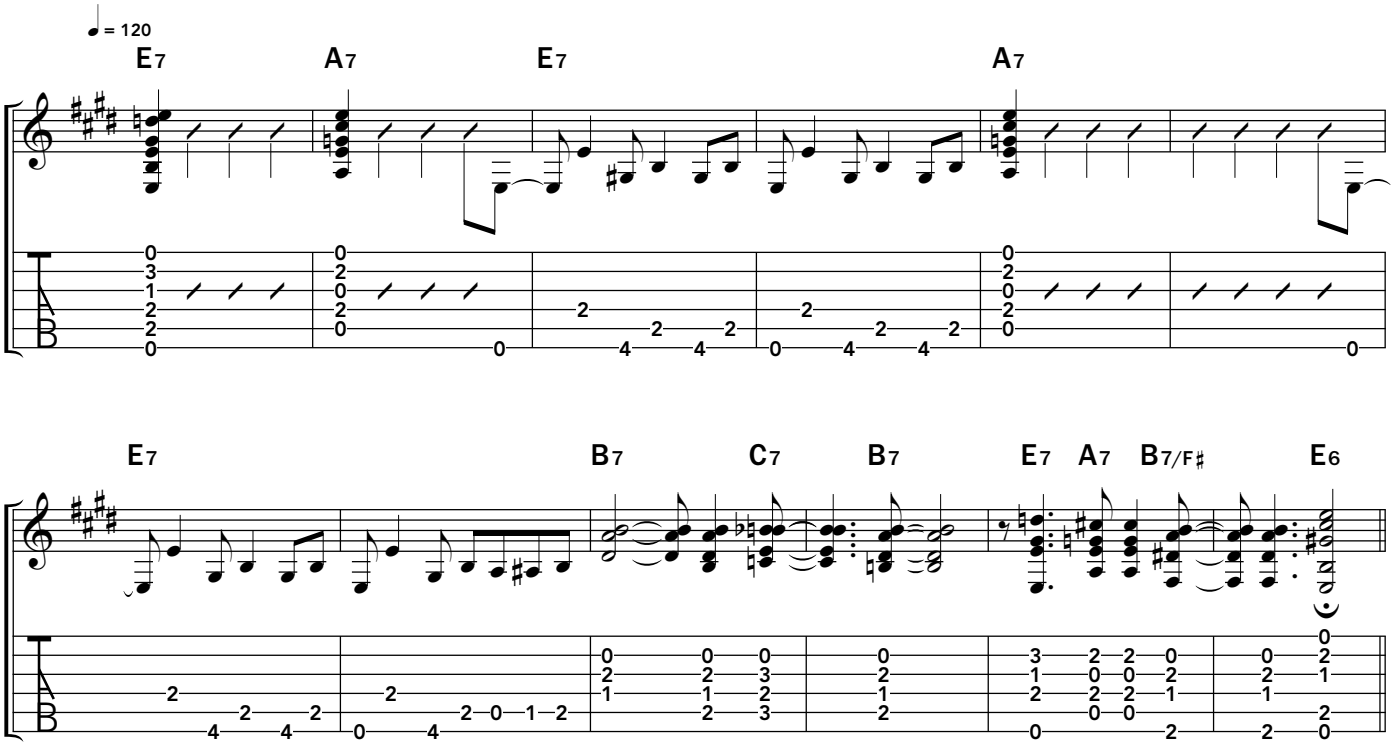
You may notice that the indicated tempos are different in these last three examples, even though they are inspired by a single recording. This is not a typo! White was a dynamic, energetic performer. Sometimes he sped up.

Adam Levy is department chair of the guitar performance program at Los Angeles College of Music. His guitar work has appeared on recordings by Norah Jones, Tracy Chapman, Amos Lee, and Ani DiFranco, among others. Get more lessons from Levy through his educational series on YouTube and adamlevy.com.

Ex. 6b



Ex. 6c




AN AUTHENTIC AMERICAN ORIGINAL
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women, guitars & success

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The Unbreakable Buffy Sainte-Marie

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Matron Saints

6 legendary guitarists who revolutionized music as we know it

Gillian Welch experienced her first musical epiphany at summer camp, watching her counselor play guitar around a campfire.



THE UN-BREAK-ABLE BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE



PHOTO BY CHRISTIE GOODWIN



Buffy Sainte-Marie's latest album, *Power in the Blood*, won the prestigious Polaris Music Prize.

MATT BARNES

A candid conversation with the resilient songwriter and activist

BY WHITNEY PHANEUF

"I thought it would be over tomorrow," says Buffy Sainte-Marie, remembering her first big break in 1963 when a *New York Times* music critic came to her debut at Greenwich Village's Gaslight Cafe and the next day declared her "one of the most promising new talents on the folk scene." She was 22, fresh out of college, and already had written two of her most searing, acoustic-guitar-driven protest anthems, "Universal Soldier" and "Now That the Buffalo's Gone."

"I was real different, in that I wasn't going for a career. I didn't think I was going to last," says Sainte-Marie, 75, sipping a mug of peppermint tea and sitting down to chat before performing at the American Indian Film Festival in San Francisco.

When it was over—at least in the States, where Sainte-Marie was blacklisted in the late '60s and throughout the '70s by Lyndon Johnson, Richard Nixon, and FBI Director J. Edgar Hoover—she had no idea why, chalking it up to her music falling out of favor with fickle American tastes (rather than government interference). She continued recording and touring outside the United States, before taking a 16-year recording hiatus in 1975 to raise her son. It wasn't until the '80s that she learned her music had been suppressed, also discovering the US government tapped her phone and she had a 31-page FBI file.

For Sainte-Marie, the personal has always been political. Born Beverly Sainte-Marie to Cree parents on the Piapot Plains Cree First Nation Reserve in the Qu'Appelle Valley of Saskatchewan, Canada, she was orphaned within the first year of her life and adopted by a couple who were part Micmac. A self-proclaimed "loner," music came naturally and from a young age. Upon graduating from the University of Massachusetts with a B.A. in philosophy, Sainte-Marie thought she'd become a teacher, but her course changed after moving to New York City.

Her 1964 debut album—aptly titled *It's My Way!* (Vanguard)—established her as one of folk's most unique voices, with her electrifying vibrato, her use of alternate guitar tunings, and her ability to tackle topical themes (cultural genocide, drug addiction, war) in a three-minute song. In 1969, she trailblazed a new path on her sixth album,

Illuminations (Vanguard), the first quadraphonic vocal album ever made. Using a Buchla synthesizer, Sainte-Marie layered vocals and acoustic guitar into a mind-melting album that was the precursor to freak folk and can be heard today in the sound of Sufjan Stevens, Joanna Newsom, and Devendra Banhart.

Sainte-Marie has a gift for both far-flung experimentation and chart-topping pop music. Her widely covered 1965 single "Until It's Time for You to Go" spawned hits for Elvis, Neil Diamond, and the Four Pennies. "Up Where We Belong," from the feature film *An Officer and a Gentleman*, co-written with Will Jennings and then-husband Jack Nietzsche, earned her an Academy Award in 1983—making her the only indigenous North-American person to win an Oscar.

The accolades continued with her most recent album, 2015's *Power in the Blood* (True North), which won the prestigious Polaris Music Prize—beating out nine Canadian artists that included hit rapper Drake and indie-rock supergroup the New Pornographers—as well as two 2016 Juno Awards (the Canadian Grammys) for Contemporary Roots Album of the Year and Aboriginal Album of the Year. In 2015, the American Music Association recognized her tireless dedication to social justice with a Spirit of Americana/Free Speech in Music Award. Last fall, she released a video voicing her support for activists at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation, where Native Americans, veterans, and other activists were protesting construction of the Dakota Access pipeline.

Sitting down with Sainte-Marie on the heels of her return to the spotlight, at least in the States, she's glowing with gratitude. (She claims the glow is due to a lifelong regimen of "bed, bath, and ballet.") She's as defiant and self-assured as the girl who put an exclamation point on the title of her first album. But, surprisingly, she's not jaded. Sainte-Marie opens up about how she's persevered—as an artist and an activist—and why she's uplifted by the fact that there's always more work to be done.

Tell me about the first songs you played on guitar?

I had been playing music on the piano . . . I used to play fake Beethoven and fake Tchaikovsky and anything I heard on the radio. I was supposed to be ironing my school clothes, but I discovered rockabilly radio, so I was listening to Scotty Moore, Elvis Presley, Lonnie Donegan. My dad bought me my first guitar. I had seen it in a pawn shop.

Did you teach yourself songs off the radio, off records?

No, I made 'em up myself, just fooling around on the guitar. I've always been able to find a song in a guitar. You take your hand, put it on any tuning peg, and twist. Then you do the same thing with the next one until you find something that appeals to you.

How old were you?

I was about 16. I knew I must be some kind of musician, because I can sit down and make up music, of just about any kind you can think of. I do it for fun. But I failed all my music classes. I couldn't read music, and I thought, "Oh, I'm probably just lazy." I've tried three times as an adult to learn how to read [music] and I can't. I was told that if you can't read music, you're not a musician. I only recently learned I am dyslexic.

I wasn't trying to embarrass white people. I was trying to give them something they had never had a chance to know—what happened to Native American people.

I was raised in predominantly white towns in Maine and Massachusetts. I was told that there weren't any more Indians. So it's kind of a dichotomy that's beaded the edges of my life, all these things that you can't be—but I actually knew better.

When did you write 'Universal Soldier'?

I was probably 20 or 21.

Before you moved to New York?

Yeah, I'd already written it when I went to New York. I had just graduated from college, I had a degree in oriental philosophy and a teacher's degree, and I thought I was going to India to continue studying. So I showed up in Greenwich Village with my guitar, singing songs that had come quite naturally to me, about everything under the sun.

There were a lot of open-mic nights and I said, "Oh, what the heck, I'll do that." And I went to Gerde's Folk City. Bob Dylan was hanging around there—he wasn't famous yet—and he said, "You know where else you oughta go? Go down to the Gaslight, and talk to Sam Hood."

I didn't think I was going to last. I thought I was going to India.

How did you fit into the Greenwich Village folk scene?

I wasn't a part of it. They were singing "This land is your land, this land is my land." They didn't realize how offensive that is to Native-American people. This land used to be my land, but we traded it. You gave us the Bible, and you got the land, right? There was always that.

I was such a loner. I was a girl with a pair of sneakers and a guitar. But onstage, I always wore high heels and pretty dresses. The folk police didn't like that.

Folk police! I love that.

Look at what girls were wearing—granny dresses and sandals and that kind of thing. It was fine, nothing wrong with that, but I used to order my clothes from Frederick's of Hollywood. It's the only place I could find va-va-voom dresses, and I wore 'em, and sang "Universal Soldier." [*laughter*]

So you're performing songs like 'Universal Soldier' wearing lingerie and, even still, I'm sure you scared the hell out of some people. I know it was covered by Donovan. Is it widely known as your song?

A lot of people still tell me I didn't write it. They tell me Donovan did.

Someone once tried to tell me Gram Parsons wrote 'Cod'ine.'

Yeah, that's right. And "Until It's Time for You to Go," they said Rod McKuen wrote that. No. I wrote all those songs. But with Donovan, you know, it's an easy mistake to make. He only sang his own songs, and then he sang "Universal Soldier" and "Cod'ine." People figured that he wrote them, and his management didn't say he didn't.

I have this song, "Johnny Be Fair," and about six months ago, I was in Australia at a music festival and an Irish folk singer came up to me and she said, "I just have to ask you, because one of the songs in our traditional Irish literature is called 'Johnny Be Fair,' and somebody told me that you claim you wrote it." And I said, "Are you kidding? Is it really? Yeah, I wrote that." So, you never know.

Was it Vanguard [her first label] that marketed you as a folksinger?

Yeah, it really wasn't the place to put me. People who wanted Ewan MacColl and Joan Baez, pure singers of traditional folk music, were disappointed in me. But Vanguard signed me, and when they signed me, they said, "Who's your lawyer?" and I said, "What's that?" And they

said, "That's OK, you can use ours." So eventually, when I finally got out of my Vanguard contract, that was part of it. That they had hoodwinked me in a conflict of interest. Things like that don't so much impact your wallet as it impacts your heart and soul. I mean, I never even got to decide. I had zero control.

You had no creative control?

None at all. As a matter of fact, the last album that I made for Vanguard, I was in the hospital, and the art director came and said, "If you're not going to re-sign with us, this is the cover we're using for—we're going to call it *The Best of Buffy Sainte-Marie, Vol. 2*." It was a really bad picture, and [the album] was a lot of outtakes. They just wanted to sell records. They would do anything. They'd paint it green or they'd paint it black or they'd paint it purple or they'd paint it yellow. You know? They were just guessing. They were just trying to outguess the marketplace. Record companies, the record business, people think it's about music, but it's not. The business is only about money.

I want to talk about your first album. You come out the gate with 'Now That the Buffalo's Gone.' It's not easing anybody into what you're about. It unapologetically presents you as a political artist.

What I'm trying to do in a song like "Now That the Buffalo's Gone," "Universal Soldier," "Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee," or "Generation"—which is on the new album—I'm trying to give people something that they otherwise wouldn't know about. But I'm not trying to hurt them. I'm not trying to break their hearts. I'm not trying to give them the truth in an enema. As a college girl, it's like, I'm writing a thesis for a professor who doesn't like me and doesn't want me to have the point of view I'm trying to convince him of.

You're being persuasive.

Yeah, which I have to do in three minutes. And I love that, see? Because I trained to be a teacher, so a short attention span is perfect for an audience and a songwriter. All these things went together for me. The idea of writing a concise thesis and getting an A+ from somebody who doesn't like me, that's the kind of challenge that I like. I was facing audiences who knew zero about Native-American people. Let alone that a dam [Kinzua Dam] was being built in New York State and that the oldest treaty in the Congressional Archives [Treaty of Canandaigua] had been broken by George Washington.



COURTESY OF BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE

A couple of guys go in the back room and they make nasty phone calls to the networks, to the media, to the press. You only have to hold a person underwater for four minutes and they're dead.

Did you ever get any feedback about the political songs in particular?

Sometimes. I mean, especially "My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying," which is Indian 101 in six minutes. Some people really would be offended. Some people wanted their money back.

Did that make you not want to play it?

No, not at all, because I wasn't doing it to be mean to them. I wasn't trying to embarrass white people. I was trying to give them something they had never had a chance to know—what happened to Native-American people. How we got to be in the state that we're in today. Extreme poverty and bad health and terrible diet. In one generation, we went from a diet of fresh food and buffalo stew to baloney and Jell-O. I mean why not take an opportunity? If all of a sudden, you're rich and famous for a few minutes, why not take an opportunity to do what you wanted to do?

So "Now That the Buffalo's Gone" was part of that, and so was "Universal Soldier"—I thought it was an irrefutable argument against war and it still is.

I did realize that some people, especially in New York, were coming to Buffy's concert to see the little Indian girl cry. And that just stood my hair on end—that there were some people who were just coming to indulge their emotions. So I took my show to the reservations. I told people, "Turn around and dig the beauty of your own people."

What songs made you cry? Did you actually cry when you performed?

"My Country 'Tis of Thy People You're Dying," "Now That the Buffalo's Gone." I wouldn't stand there blubbering. I would just get a stronger vibrato because my throat kind of tightens up when I'm emotional.

When did you realize your music was being suppressed?

I made four albums in Nashville with

[producer] Norbert Putnam that were really, really good, but we couldn't get them played. It was killing me that we couldn't get 'em played. Because, you know, we were doing them night after night onstage and people were going crazy for them. It was the early '70s and I was totally out of the picture by then. It didn't matter what we put out. My name was dead. I never knew why until the '80s.

How did you find out?

A DJ publicly apologized to me for having gone along with letters from the [Lyndon] Johnson White House calling to suppress my music. I didn't think much about it, but I mentioned it to my lawyer, and he said, "Let's see if you have FBI files." And I said, "No, man, I've never been that important." Well, sure enough, there were FBI files, and I saw them.

I was really not suffering during those years. I was having a great career outside of the US, and I thought that tastes change, and singers come and singers go. That's what you think. I mean, who would have thought it?

I didn't know that any of it was going to get me in trouble. People will say, "Well, doesn't that make you hate the goddamn US government?" No. It has nothing to do with the government. It has nothing to do with the United States as a country. The Lyndon Johnson administration was a handful of cronies. And then, Nixon? He objected to my stance on the whole American Indian Movement [AIM]. The federal government wanted an eighth of the Pine Ridge Reservation, which contained uranium. That's what that was about.

So a couple of guys go in the back room and they make nasty phone calls to the networks, to the media, to the press. You only have to hold a person underwater for four minutes and they're dead.

I was indignant for you when I found out. Like, she's not as famous as she should be here, people don't listen to her enough. But you don't seem to carry a chip on your shoulder.

No. There are things that bothered me about being gagged in the US, but it didn't have to do with my own career, it had more to do with the fact that people didn't have a clue. They were denied what I had to give. I always felt funny about that. I felt as though I could have been more effective.

I was working with the American Indian Movement and the energy companies were really down on us. The FBI was down on us. But I got away cheap. I mean, my career was drowned, but other people were murdered. Other people were given life sentences. Poor John Trudell [AIM leader, poet, and spoken-word artist], his family was burned alive in their home during a nighttime firebombing. I don't think that's the way most Americans want the world to be.

The hard part of it, for me, was that I was not invited to play in Indian country. Because who owned the newspapers? Who owned the venues? Who owned the theaters? Who owned the radio stations? It was people who did not want me and my big mouth talking about what was going on in Indian country. Consequently, I didn't play the Dakotas, I didn't play Montana, I didn't play the Southwest.

It's a terrible shame for the people who lived in those areas—especially the non-Indian people, who could've learned something. Being blacklisted by Johnson and Nixon is one thing, but being gagged in Indian country by essentially real-estate agents is to me a true tragedy. So I'm not known in those areas.

It had to get to you at some point.

It still does, sometimes. Well, in the US. As soon as I enter the country, I become anonymous. But I've kind of made that work for me, too. You have to stay cheerful about it. You have to say, "You know what? I'm going to do this."

That's what I really admire about you.

Thanks. There's a lot of good work left to be done in the world. There always has been. I've just never been the type of person to get discouraged because once you solve a problem, you see a new problem. That's how it is. My own philosophy is that everybody in the world, whether we want to admit it or not, is ripening. A little bit at a time. I think every living cell is a part of the body of God and it all ripens together. We're all learning, and we're all ripening, even the guys that you don't like. Even if you don't like it, they're learning, too. It just seems that it goes so slow, until you look back 50 years and you realize that it's been lightning fast. And there's always some more left to be done. Once you're comfortable with that, I think you're happy. AG



WHAT BUFFY SAINTE-MARIE PLAYS

These days, Buffy Sainte-Marie is often seen with a Yamaha SLG110 Silent Guitar, but she has a number of vintage acoustics and electrics in her collection. Those include a 1928 Martin 000-45 12-fret with a slotted headstock; a 1907 Martin 1-45; a 1930s Larson Brothers Prairie State acoustic; a Del Vecchio Dinamico resonator once owned by Chet Atkins; an Ovation Preacher 12-string, from the late 1970s (she once posed for an Ovation ad with a 1967 Roundback model); a Takamine EF-340S dreadnought; and assorted guitars by Alvarez, Washburn, and others.



'I WAS LOOKING FOR A MANAGER IN NASHVILLE AND WAS TOLD BY ONE, "WE ALREADY HAVE ENOUGH WOMEN ARTISTS ON OUR ROSTER." ENOUGH WOMEN? I THOUGHT THAT WAS CURIOUS.'
MURIEL ANDERSON

IN HER OWN WORDS

14 guitarists, educators, and luthiers share their passion for the craft

BY WHITNEY PHANEUF, ANNA PULLEY, KAREN PETERSON & PAULINE FRANCE

When the editors of *Acoustic Guitar* decided to carve out a special section on the topic of women, guitars, and success, I was hesitant. The sheer act of compiling women guitarists, educators, and luthiers into a segregated list implies that their artistry is somehow defined by their gender. I've come to resent the mainstream music magazines' annual "Women's Issue," a token honor tossed out once-a-year instead of showcasing women in every issue. It was only after I spoke to Rosanne Cash, following the taping of her 2016 *Acoustic Guitar Session*, that I realized this focus had an opportunity to change our readers' perspectives. I had nervously asked Cash about her experience as a woman in the music industry and within a minute she revealed the revolting manner in which she had been treated by record company executives when starting her career. My jaw dropped as she told me how the men in charge of marketing discussed her sex appeal as a tool to sell records. What happened to Cash in the '80s is, of course, not the experience of all women. But it is indicative of the challenges women have faced in the male-dominated music industry, especially in the booking, recording, and lutherie sectors.

Fortunately, the times they are a changin'—at least a bit. Last year, *Guitar World* announced it would stop using images of a bikini-clad women on the cover of its annual buyer's guide issue—a longtime tradition that the publisher finally recognized as outdated and offensive. The decision was ultimately about economics, Publisher Bill Amstutz told Reverb.com, "The number of women players is growing and we want to support them." (The brand continues to sell a 2017 "Hottest Chicks in Hard Rock" calendar.) On the indie side of publishing, the world's only print magazine dedicated solely to women guitarists is thriving. In 2016, only its fourth year in print, *She Shreds* reports a six-fold increase in the magazine's overall growth. In recent months, *AG* has added several new women contributors and will continue its commitment to covering women in the trade.

The 14 artists featured in this special focus—and there are many more who could have been included, from recent *AG* cover subject Lucinda Williams to young bluegrass picker Molly Tuttle (look for a lesson by her in next month's issue)—represent a small sample, but they share one commonality: Their desire to be considered first and foremost for their craft and not their gender. I hope their stories, in their own words, inspire you to support one another and play on!
—Whitney Phaneuf, managing editor

Musician and composer **MURIEL ANDERSON** *is an acclaimed fingerstyle and harp guitarist. She was the first woman to win the National Fingerstyle Guitar Championship, and her music encompasses many different genres, including jazz, classical, bluegrass, and international folk. She is host of the Muriel Anderson All-Star Guitar Night and founder of the charity, Music for Life Alliance.*



I knew from the moment I picked up a guitar at age seven and taught myself how to play that it was the instrument for me. I liked the way it felt—like I was interacting with it. I always thought that was the coolest thing, to become a professional musician. My first hero was Doc Watson. He really inspired me. I'd run home from school to listen to his LP.

When I was starting out in my early genre-less career, no one was doing what I was doing, and the music industry didn't know what to do with me. I couldn't get an agent or a manager. They'd ask "What kind of music do you play," and I couldn't really answer. There wasn't a path for me in the industry, so I created my own.

I do recall one incident that struck me as odd: I was looking for a manager in Nashville and was told by one, "We already have enough women artists on our roster." Enough women? I thought that was curious.

Instead of deciding whether to play only jazz or classical or bluegrass, I decided to just play the music that made me happy, the music in my heart, which included music from all those different genres. I began to tour more and people discovered that they liked the variety of my music, the joy and the love in it.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: A 20-string harp guitar made by Mike Doolin.

ROSANNE CASH *is a chart-topping singer-songwriter and best-selling author. Her 2015 album* The River & the Thread*—co-written with her longtime producer and partner, the guitarist John Leventhal—swept the 2016 Grammy Awards, winning Best Americana Album, as well as Best American Roots Song and Best American Roots Performance for "A Feather's Not a Bird." In addition to continual touring, Cash has collaborated on music programming with Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, San Francisco Jazz, Minnesota Orchestra, and the US Library of Congress.*

I'm not a great guitarist—I'm OK. I can accompany myself well enough and I can accompany John [Leventhal] really well. Playing with John requires at least good timing, because he's very meticulous. I was never known as a guitar player, but I am—for 40 years! I never had a desire for people to notice my guitar playing. I always figured I was just a rhythm accompanist, I'm not playing lead. The first time I really felt valued as a guitar player was when Martin made the Rosanne Cash signature model. Then I felt it. I was so honored.

An inspiration to me is Sister Rosetta Tharpe—one of the most badass guitar players ever. Ever! I always hated the designation of being a *woman* songwriter, a *woman* musician. Like what does that mean? It's a subcategory? We're not good enough to play with the big boys? You don't have to make a separate category for us.

It mirrors what's going on with the rest of the culture. I went to see Helen Mirren speak and they asked her about the paucity of great roles for middle-aged women. She said, "I wouldn't worry about the role of women in Hollywood, I'd worry about the role of women in the culture." What's going on in the culture-at-large is reflected in all other industries.

Has it changed for the better? In some ways, yeah. Thirty-five years ago, when I was making my first record, I went into a label meeting and they actually said in front of me that their goal for the record was to make me appear "f*ckable." They said that in front of me! I don't think a young woman starting out [now] would go into a marketing meeting and hear that. They'd probably say it behind her back, if that's an improvement.

The whole Nashville machinery tended to treat women differently. You had to play nicer. You had to fit a certain kind of ideology and look, and I didn't play that. But that was the '80s—sexism was still rampant.

I got a really thick skin, but I'm not bitter and I don't have a chip on my shoulder. Bitterness gives you wrinkles.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: Martin OM-28M Rosanne Cash Signature Edition.

GILLIAN WELCH *is an Americana icon. The singer-songwriter and guitarist (and one-time punk bassist) served as associate producer and performed two songs on the* O Brother, Where Art Thou*? soundtrack, a platinum album that won a Grammy for Album of the Year. Her recording of "I'll Fly Away," with Alison Krauss, from the film soundtrack, won a Grammy for Best Country Collaboration with Vocals. With musical partner David Rawlings—the duo is collectively known as Gillian Welch—they are celebrating the 20th anniversary of their first release,* Revival, *with an album of demos, outtakes, and alternate tracks.*

GILLIAN WELCH



'I WANT TO RISE ABOVE WOMEN'S ISSUES TO PEOPLE'S ISSUES. WE ARE ALL UP AGAINST THE SAME PROBLEMS.'
GILLIAN WELCH

I was at summer camp when I had my first musical epiphany. I was about seven or eight and the counselor was playing an acoustic guitar around the campfire. The idea of being able to play music wherever I was blew my mind. My second lightning bolt hit a decade later when friends took me to a folk festival in Yosemite National Park. I thought, "Oh, wow. People are doing this. *I can do this*!"

I grew up in Los Angeles listening to the standard-bearers of roots music—Woody Guthrie, the Carter Family, the Stanley Brothers, the latter drawing me in by the sound of their voices and the songs that seemed unself-consciously truthful and the stories honest. I love folk music, a love that satisfies me in a deep way for its everyday poetry and for its elevation of the human condition. Folk music was a means for coming together as a community, a joy-filled respite for isolated people who lived hardscrabble lives.

I had it drilled into my head from the time I understood words that everyone is equal. We really need to try to go for the universal in how we walk through the world. I feel like I never even gave gender bias any quarter or thought. My hope is that my songs are good songs for people. I want to rise above women's issues to people's issues. We are all up against the same problems. I wish I had extended a challenge to a woman I had a conversation with after a concert. Her position was that no man could ever understand her. I thought that was a very fatalistic, destructive position, the antithesis of everything I believe. I wish now that I'd asked her if she could tell which words from our songs I had written and which ones Dave had written.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: A 1956 Gibson JS50.

ANI DIFRANCO *is a Grammy Award-winning folk singer, songwriter, guitarist, and label owner whose politically charged lyrics and distinctive, percussive style have made her an inspiration to countless musicians, artists, and fans. At 19, DiFranco blazed a trail when she rejected the Los Angeles-based recording machine and created her own indie label, Righteous Babe Records, and released her first album at 20. Twenty-five years, 18 studio albums, and many live albums later, the folk troubadour remains* a role model, *and a beacon of modern sensibility and social change.*

Was my experience in the music industry different from a man's? Well, yeah, fundamentally

ANI DiFRANCO



'WOMEN ARE NOT SEEN AS MUSICIANS AS READILY AS MEN BECAUSE MEN HAVE HAD A MUCH LONGER AND MORE STORIED RELATION SHIP WITH INSTRUMENTS!'
ANI DIFRANCO

I guess. But not necessarily worse. Was it different from someone on a major label? Very, very different, indeed. My path of "be your own label" has made all the difference in my journey and I am very grateful to myself for taking some good, if uncharted, turns early on.

Women in the music industry are the same as women in the rest of society. Women are not seen as musicians as readily as men because men have had a much longer and more storied relationship with instruments! It is only recently that girls have started to really be handed the tools of music. Slowly, the landscape of music is changing and perceptions are changing with it.

Have you ever listened to Aretha Franklin's piano playing? People never mention it, but it is awesome! Have you ever listened to Regina Spektor's piano playing? It is awesome, too, and I think maybe people haven't even noticed. Viva evolution! I also love Bonnie Raitt. I love Karen Dalton, and Big Mama Thornton. Whatever the era, you just gotta play because you love it. That's my advice to women guitarists starting out in this business: Play for the love of music. Want nothing more.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: An Alvarez WY1 and a Gibson LG2.

Toronto-based master luthier **LINDA MANZER** *owns Manzer Guitars and is famous for her archtop and flattop acoustic guitars—notably the artful Pikasso, with three necks and 42 strings, designed initially for longtime client Pat Metheny, as well as her often imitated body-shape innovation known as the Manzer Wedge. She learned the trade from famed Canadian luthier Jean Larrivée.*

It was at a Joni Mitchell concert that my fate was sealed. She was playing a dulcimer, and I rushed out the next day to buy one. It cost $150, which was more than I could afford. I was about 16 or 17, and the clerk talked me into buying a kit that cost half the price. We sat on the steps of the Toronto Folklore Center, arguing about whether or not I could build one. To this day, I thank him, for that's when I discovered the joy and beauty of making something come to life with strings on it.

At the time, the guitar-making trade was 100-percent male. It may be hard to imagine now, but in 1974 people didn't want to buy guitars from girls. I'd go into a hardware store and no one would wait on me. They assumed I was someone's girlfriend.

I try to move my art along incrementally, guitar by guitar. I've just finished a little parlor guitar that I love. I'm playing it myself until it finds a home. Yet the one that tugs at

my artistic heartstrings most is the Bear, with its bear-claw top [wood from spruce trees marked as if by claw scratches]. I've built two, one for a client and the other for the 25th anniversary of Manzer Guitars. Now I'm starting on a third, aiming for our 50th anniversary eight years down the road. I'm not that old yet, but I'm getting there.

LINDA MANZER



'IN 1974, PEOPLE DIDN'T WANT TO BUY GUITARS FROM GIRLS. I'D GO INTO A HARDWARE STORE AND NO ONE WOULD WAIT ON ME. THEY ASSUMED I WAS SOMEONE'S GIRLFRIEND.'
LINDA MANZER

The real test of surviving in the trade isn't about gender. It is really physically hard work and requires a wide range of skills. You have to be prepared to get dirty and get splinters. You're tired and dusty—and you can look really unattractive. If that matters, it's probably not for you. But if you like being around incredible musicians, and being part of the source of that magic, then it's definitely worth every trip to the hospital—I've lost the tips of two fingers! Power tools don't discriminate.

Veritable rock-icon **MELISSA ETHERIDGE** *is known for her searing tales of longing and heartache. The two-time Grammy winner hit her commercial stride with songs like "I'm the Only One" and "Come to My Window." In her 35-plus years in the music industry, Etheridge has founded her own record label (ME Records), won an Oscar for Best Original Song, and debuted on Broadway as St. Jimmy in Green Day's rock opera,* American Idiot. *Etheridge's latest album,* MEmphis Rock and Soul, *honors the legendary Stax Records in Memphis, Tennessee.*

MELISSA ETHERIDGE



'THERE WAS THE CRAZY BELIEF THAT IF YOU PLAYED TWO WOMEN ON A RADIO STATION NO ONE WOULD LISTEN TO YOUR STATION OR SOMETHING. '
MELISSA ETHERIDGE

When starting out, it's hard for everybody to make a place and make a living as a musician, whether you're a man or a woman. I know my experience was very unique and my own—a lot of it had to do with being a woman, a lot of it had to do with being a lesbian, a lot of it had to do with me being from the Midwest.

When my first album finally came out in 1988 and my promotion guys went to the radio stations, the rock stations said, "Oh, I'm sorry, we're already playing a woman, we can't play another one." There was the crazy belief that if you played two women on a radio station no one would listen to your station or something. That's changed now, of course. If you're interesting, it doesn't matter if you're a man or a woman.

When my first album finally came out, there was an onslaught of women. It was just a ton—Tracy Chapman, Edie Brickell, Michelle Shocked, Toni Childs, Sinead O'Connor, and on and on—and it really broke that world open.

Probably the biggest challenge I faced early on was that the minute people saw me with an acoustic guitar, they instantly thought I was folk music. I'm not folk at all—it's confessional singer-songwriter stuff—but I always wanted to be rock 'n' roll, and always had that kind of energy behind it. In the beginning, it was hard for people to understand what I did. People still come to see me and they're surprised that I can play leads and that I'm quite good at playing guitar. They're like, "Oh! I didn't know you could do that!" Somehow it hasn't quite got out there in the world.

If I had one piece of advice to impart to female guitarists starting out, it would be to understand inside of yourself what you love about music. And then understand that success is a lifelong process. There isn't something you're going to achieve that's going to give you this sense that you've "done it"—it's a continuous process, day by day. Every now and then, every year or so, you look back and go, "Ah! Look how far I've come."

WHAT SHE PLAYS: Melissa Etheridge Signature Ovation Adamas.

COURTNEY HARTMAN



'WHEN I WAS A TEENAGER OR EARLY-20s, THERE WERE A NUMBER OF TIMES THAT I HEARD, "OH WOW. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO SAY THIS EXACTLY, BUT YOU'RE REALLY GOOD FOR A GIRL.'"
COURTNEY HARTMAN

COURTNEY HARTMAN *is known for her intricate guitar work in the all-female bluegrass quintet Della Mae. Her elaborate leads have invoked comparisons to Hot Rize's Bryan Sutton or Tony Rice. But Hartman is also an accomplished singer-songwriter, last year releasing a critically-acclaimed solo EP,* Nothing We Say.

I fell in love with guitar when I was 11 or 12. My dad encouraged me and my siblings. He was like, "Hey, Court, can you teach me this tune?"

I used to be surprised when I would meet girls my age who played when I was starting out, and as a teenager. And now, it's so cool to see. And in some way, if Della Mae or myself has had any part in encouraging or somehow mentoring younger girls growing up, in the bluegrass world specifically, that'd be amazing.

It's amazing to watch all these badass little picker girls that we get to see grow. And the numbers *have* grown. That alone in the last few years has been a really fun thing to watch.

I grew up playing with guys. I would also play with four of my sisters, but the majority of the bluegrass scene in Colorado was mostly guys. I didn't really take note of it, but when I got to Berklee College of Music, at about 19, there were about 900 guitar players while I was there and I could count the other women that I interacted with in the guitar department on one hand. And then I went straight into playing music with four awesome women in Della Mae.

When I was a teenager or early-20s, there were a number of times that I heard, "Oh wow. I don't know how to say this exactly, but you're really good for a girl." Or, "I wasn't expecting you to be good, because you play guitar and you're a girl." Rarely was it said in a way that felt demeaning—they're only trying to speak out of appreciation for what you do.

I always wanted what my music was to speak for itself—louder than me being a girl. I just wanted the music to speak first.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: A Bourgeois dreadnought and a Lawrence Smart archtop.

JANIS IAN *began her career as a guitarist, singer, and songwriter at age 14 with her first hit single, "Society's Child." A decade later, Ian released another iconic song, "At Seventeen." When she was 16, comedian Bill Cosby allegedly spread a vicious rumor about Ian's sexuality, which he considered "suspect," and tried to get her blacklisted from television appearances. He failed. Ian's Grammy-winning career (two, in 1975 and 2013, plus ten nominations) has never stopped—she continues to write and tour from her home in Nashville.*

I wouldn't call myself a guitarist if I didn't feel like I could walk into a session that needed an acoustic guitarist and play. You put your chops in, you bust your ass, you want to be taken seriously. I sweated bullets to learn 'Satisfaction' on the electric guitar. I was literally told that I was much better than the other [boy] players, but that I couldn't be in the band because I was a girl.

[Girls] grow up in a vacuum. The guys are busy playing and practicing with each other, learning everything, but girls at that age are excluded. We can't get the training, and if we manage to get the training, we can't get the jobs, and if can't get the jobs, we can't have a career, and if we don't have a career, we don't exist.

I didn't start understanding the difference until I was tapped by Sony as part of the triumvirate that included Bruce Springsteen and Billy Joel and seeing how differently they were treated. There were no hard feelings between the three of us. It was about promotion and marketing, and the idea that women don't sell records like men sell records. Of course, Whitney Houston blasted the lid off that a few years later.

JANIS IAN



'IF THERE'S ANYTHING TAYLOR SWIFT HAS DONE FOR THE MUSIC INDUSTRY, IT'S THAT SHE'S MADE IT ACCEPTABLE FOR GIRLS TO PLAY GUITAR . . . BUT THAT'S JUST ONE WOMAN IN ONE GENERATION.'
JANIS IAN

When I found out from my manager [about Cosby], I got angry. But there's nothing you can do. You can't get crazy. You'd lose your mind. You just move on.

In my life, artists on the scale of a David Bowie never gave a shit about gender. It was irrelevant to the work. Prince had no problem. Chick Corea is a wonderful gender-blind player. So, there are exceptions, of course.

Young men today are, by and large, better. If there's anything Taylor Swift has done for the music industry, besides prop it up, it's that she's made it acceptable for girls to play guitar . . . but that's just one woman in one generation.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: A Santa Cruz Guitar Co. Janis Ian Signature JI2

A self-taught guitarist who was mentored by Norman and Nancy Blake, Tennessean **VALERIE JUNE** *percolates folk, soul, blues, Americana, country, and devotional elements into her music, then tops it off with a genre-defying voice and world-weary lyrics that head straight to the gut. "I ain't fit to be no mother, I ain't fit to be no wife," June sings on "Workin' Woman Blues," from her 2013 breakthrough album* Pushin' Against a Stone. *June continues pushin' with her distinctive sound that blurs convention and expectations on her new album* The Order of Time.

I would find myself in the early days of my career entering a guitar shop and feeling intimidated by being female. Not that anyone ever made me feel that way, but it did kind of feel like I was accidentally walking into the men's bathroom. If I was a man, I would probably have had a little more confidence from the start. I might have felt more welcome in stores, studios, and venues. But being a woman has so many advantages, too. I can remember putting together a press kit, getting presentable, and walking into venues in Memphis. I'd ask to speak to the person in charge of booking. Sometimes, I think I had a better chance at the venue listening to my CD because I was a girl.

There are always challenges when you're moving toward a dream. I try to approach them by remembering that I'm doing things that make me happy and by not having great expectations that require the approval of others. I knew when I started playing music at such a late age—in my 20s with no natural rhythm—that it was going to be a long road. I also knew that my greatest challenge would be overcoming my own insecurities and blocks. It's been a journey of overcoming my own limitations.

To that end, as a guitarist, Luther Dickinson has been the most inspiring musician in my life. He gave me my first electric guitar. Even when I've hit a bad note in front of a huge crowd, he's always said encouraging

VALERIE JUNE



'THERE ARE ALWAYS CHALLENGES WHEN YOU'RE MOVING TOWARD A DREAM.'
VALERIE JUNE

words that have helped me keep growing. Some of my favorite female guitarists I've looked up to are Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Memphis Minnie, Precious Bryant, Jessie Mae Hemphill, and Tracy Chapman.

The number one thing for any woman in this industry is to believe in yourself. The music business does have a machine-like engine that runs it. While I love and appreciate organization and a beautifully flowing business, if there was one thing I would love to see differently, it would be more respect for the artist. I think that is something that is also fully in the hands of the artist as a collective whole, but it is a rare thing to have that collective spirit of working as one. So we are in a cycle of our own creation.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: Martin 000-15M.

CHACE MILLER



'THE EXPOSURE OF WOMEN IN THIS FIELD HAS GROWN, AND THE MORE WE SHOW UP, THE MORE PEOPLE'S PERCEPTION AND EXPECTATIONS WILL CHANGE AROUND US.'
CHACE MILLER

CHACE MILLER *is a luthier based in the Pacific Northwest. She has studied with Greg Brandt and builds a small number of steel-string and classical guitars a year.*

I started playing guitar at age 14 or so, and was in love with the instrument from the very beginning. I really enjoyed spending time in shops playing different guitars and comparing tones. In the early days, it was mostly the big ones like Guitar Center, because that was what was available to me. I remember having an acute awareness of being a female in a man's world, especially because the way these stores are set up—you have to wander through the land of dudes wailing on axes cranked up on their amps to get through to the back where the acoustics are kept. There were little things that happened along the way that reinforced that awareness, like getting ripped off in a repair shop or being talked down to by sales guys. Mostly it was a feeling of just being in a heavily male-sided community that the guitar world still is.

I was really lucky in my first apprenticeship experience with Greg Brandt, who is an LA-based nylon-string maker, a very talented luthier, and just a great human being. I spent five years in his shop, first as an apprentice and then later doing my own work alongside him. He was always very supportive of me and the work I wanted to accomplish. I have also experienced the other side of things, though. It was amazing to me at guitar shows I've attended how many people would assume I was the "daughter" or the "wife," or they'd assume my guitar was Greg's when I was sharing a table with him. Of course, this was not the reaction of everyone, or even the majority, but I was amused at how often it did happen.

I was recently working as an apprentice at [another] world-class luthier's shop. The guys at the shop were great, but the environment of the shop was really toxic because of how the master luthier interacted with everyone there. It was a tough place to be the only woman. There was an underlying sexism that came out of him in little ways, like jokes and asides that in themselves are not a big deal, but reveal a much deeper undercurrent of bias and long-held assumptions that become difficult to navigate. Ultimately, it didn't work out. Some people just can't see past their own experience and limitations, but life goes on.

The fact is, this is still a largely male-dominated community and people just aren't used to seeing women in this field. The exposure of women in this field has grown, and the more we show up, the more people's perception and expectations will change around us.

SHARON ISBIN *is a preeminent instrumentalist and boundary-breaker. She is a Grammy-winning classical guitarist and the founding director of the guitar department at the Juilliard School. She is also an author, subject of a documentary about her life,* Sharon Isbin: Troubadour*, and has performed as a soloist in over 170 orchestras throughout the world, including many which had never before worked with guitar.*

I started guitar at age nine in Italy. My older brother had asked for lessons hoping to be the next Elvis, but bowed out when he learned the teacher was classical, so I took his place. After my family moved back to Minneapolis, I won student competitions there, including one at 14 in which I performed as soloist with the Minnesota Orchestra for 10,000 people—I was hooked!

I began touring Europe each summer, and soon become the first guitarist to win international competitions in Toronto and Munich, all while still a teenager. These experiences launched my career, including recordings, a New York debut, and signing with management in Europe and New York. I was so focused on breaking down barriers for the guitar that gender took a back seat. However, one summer at the Aspen Music Festival, I was one of only two girls out of 50 guitar students, and that inspired me to work even harder, so there would be no question of gender. In the music world I had to fight as a guitarist, and in the guitar world I had to fight as a woman.

SHARON ISBIN



'. . . ONE SUMMER AT THE ASPEN MUSIC FESTIVAL, I WAS ONE OF ONLY TWO GIRLS OUT OF 50 GUITAR STUDENTS, AND THAT INSPIRED ME TO WORK EVEN HARDER, SO THERE WOULD BE NO QUESTION OF GENDER.'
SHARON ISBIN

Outstanding women pianists, violinists, and cellists are now celebrated equally with men. Though there are still more men than women in the [classical] guitar world, the ratio continues to improve. We have further to go in the world of conductors and composer. In 2016, the national German newspaper *Die Welt* published a feature interview with me, but with the absurd headline that translates to "Who Says Women Can't Play the Guitar"—really, people still think that way?

WHAT SHE PLAYS: Antonius Mueller 2010 cedar double top and a SoloEtte Travel Guitar



REVERSING THE MUSE

Powerhouse British guitarist and singer-songwriter **Laura Marling**—whose meteoric rise began when she was 18 with her 2008 debut album *Alas, I Cannot Swim* (Virgin)—has women on her mind. "It occurred to me that in ten years of making records, I had only come across two female engineers working in studios," writes Marling in the introduction to her podcast, *Reversal of the Muse,* an exploration of female creativity in a male-dominated industry. "Starting from my experience of being a woman, I began to ask myself what difference it might have made had I had more women around," she continued, adding that she finds it "easier to learn from a woman."

Launched in August 2016, the podcast seeks to answer that question through conversations with a range of female (and some male) music professionals, including friends, peers, strangers, heroines, and, yes, a sound engineer—**Vanessa Parr**, in-house engineer at famed West Los Angeles recording studio, the Village. Parr assures listeners that more women will be in the studios, in time and with the right education.

Marling works to keep the 25-minute conversations on track. Her episode with UK peers, guitarists, and singer-songwriters **Marika Hackman** and **Shura** raises the darker issue of objectification of women, "as a product, something to be analyzed."

Her delight at discovering **Fanny's House of Music**, a guitar shop in Nashville, shines through in her conversation with the shop's co-owner **Patty Cole**.

"I had never seen a woman in a guitar shop—let alone run one. It was quite a joy," Marling says.

Cole comments, "Women have been left out of history, in general. The world needs a lot of healing, and music is one area that can do it."

Her last podcast of the series is perhaps her best, though Marling doesn't think so, apologizing for "sounding like a quivering wreck." That's because she's interviewing her heroines, **Dolly Parton** and **Emmylou Harris**, revealing that she learned fingerpicking by listening to Parton and backup singing from Harris. (Parton, speaking to Harris, responds with her trademark giggle and drawl, "She should be pretty good then.")

"Two of the greatest feminine creators in music," as Marling calls them, offer their perspectives as industry veterans. "I feel like we're one of the boys. I don't think of it as male-female," Parton offers. Harris adds, "You're a musician, you have a job to do," also quipping, "It's not like [the US] Congress, where we should have more women."

Marling's parting words to Dolly and Emmylou: "Thank you for existing."

Listen to all ten installments of *Reversal of the Muse* at reversalofthemuse.com.

—Karen Peterson

GABRIELLA QUEVEDO



'I HAD JUST TURNED 13 WHEN I UPLOADED MY FIRST VIDEO . . . SOMETIMES PEOPLE COMMENTED THAT I HAD VIEWS JUST BECAUSE I AM A GIRL.'
GABRIELLA QUEVEDO

GABRIELLA QUEVEDO *is a Swedish fingerstyle guitar virtuoso and YouTube phenomenon. In 2011, Quevedo emailed her guitar hero, South Korean fingerstylist Sungha Jung, which led to a fortuitous meeting and performance with him while he was touring in Sweden. She was the first girl to win the Young Talents award at the Uppsala International Guitar Festival and plans to release an album of original songs this year.*

I started playing guitar when I was 12, inspired by my father, who also plays guitar. He taught me some chords and I started playing along with my favorite songs. After a few months, I started watching fingerstyle guitarist videos and I learned by watching their videos. When I had learned a few songs, I started uploading my videos to YouTube.

I had just turned 13 when I uploaded my first video. When I started to get comments, a lot of them were encouraging, but they compared me with male guitarists. Sometimes people commented that I had views just because I am a girl.

In my country, Sweden, people have encouraged me very much. They think it's cool that a girl plays fingerstyle. I also have gotten a lot of support and encouragement from guitarists like Tommy Emmanuel, Kotaro Oshio, Sungha Jung, Andy McKee, Brian May, and Don Felder. I'm so happy and feel like I have their support. Unfortunately, I'm not in contact with any female guitarists.

Seeing other guitarists tour and make a

living out of it inspires me to keep playing and improving. Receiving comments from people telling me that I have inspired them to start playing or pick up their guitar after years of not playing also inspires me to keep going.

WHAT SHE PLAYS: A 2016 Taylor Guitar 912ce.

MAEGEN WELLS *is a luthier based out of Forestville, California, who makes handmade acoustic guitars, archtops, and mandolin instruments.*

I've been building guitars since 2006 in a variety of shops: repair shops, electric guitar manufacturers, acoustic and archtop guitar shops, and I now have my own shop, where I build my own line of guitars and mandolins. I imagine my experiences as an apprenticing luthier were not that different from a male's experience, in terms of the actual benchwork and opportunities we had. The difference

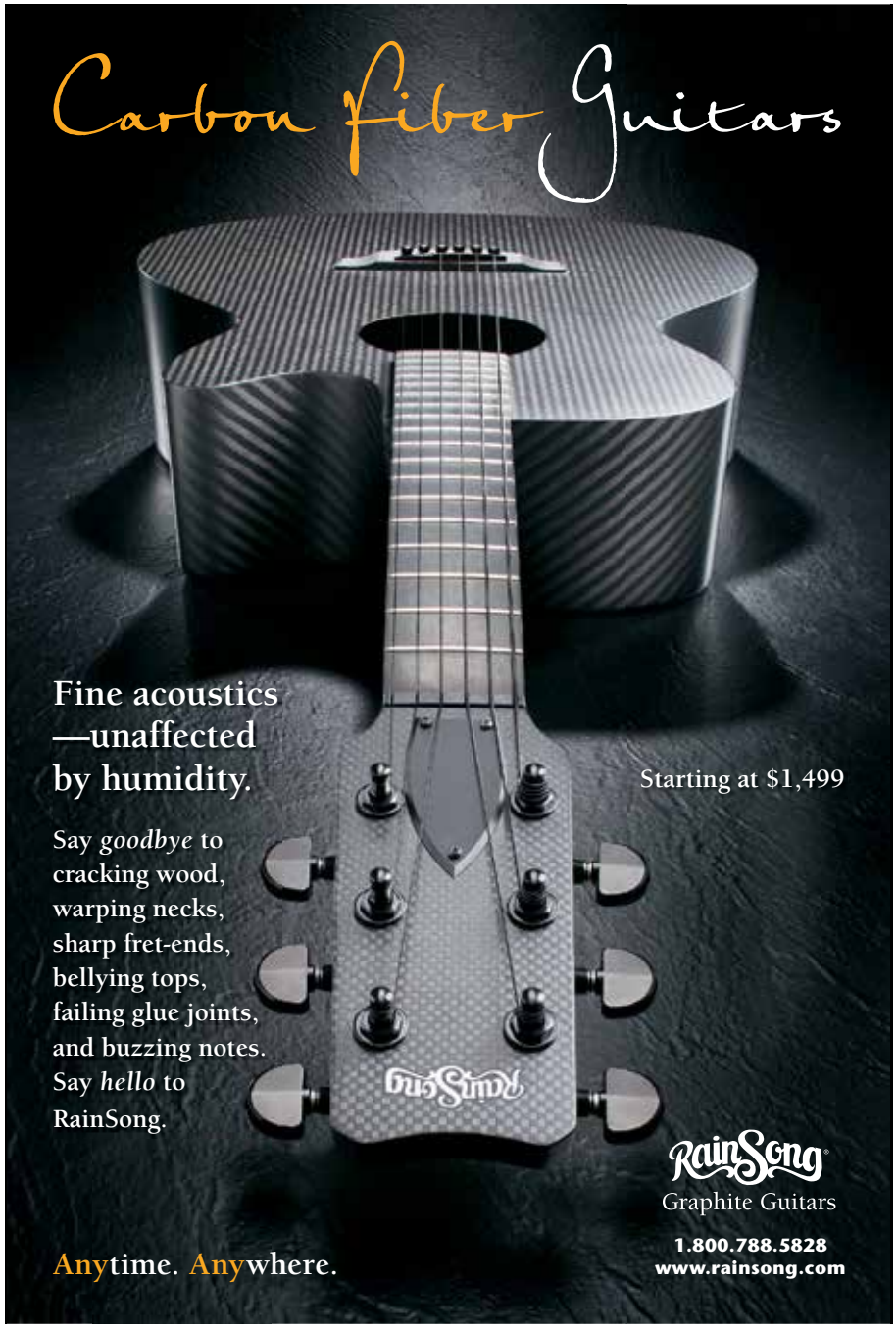


'THE FOCUS SEEMS TO QUICKLY SHIFT FROM MY INSTRUMENTS, TO HOW UNCOMMON IT IS TO MEET A FEMALE WHO LOVES WORKING WITH THEIR HANDS, TOOLS, AND WOOD.'
MAEGEN WELLS

may be in what society perceives our "natural abilities" to be as men and women. The focus seems to quickly shift from my instruments, to how uncommon it is to meet a female who loves working with their hands, tools, and wood.

There have been a variety of obstacles and challenges over the past ten years that have been gender-related. Some of them have been large, and some of them have been small. I honestly can't say that being accepted and supported by the community of guitar makers and players is one of them. It's an amazing group of men and women. As time goes by, we're definitely seeing more and more women in the music industry. I saw a show at a huge venue in San Francisco last summer and the whole stage crew was made up of women. The tech crew, sound and lighting crew—everyone was a female! They were clearly really smart, hard-working women who are really good at what they do, completely pro. I was so inspired! You would have never seen anything like that 40 years ago.

Being a female in a male-dominated industry has its advantages and disadvantages. It can be a spotlight as well as a curse. Some people will determine whether you are great or not without ever looking at your work, which is true for everyone, but when that's a gender-based decision, great or not, it's a completely different kind of discouragement. Don't be distracted by this nonsense. It's not what's important. Take care of your craft, and it will take care of you.



A guitarist and composer known for her percussive style and vivacious live performances, **KAKI KING** *has recorded eight albums, toured relentlessly, and scored and contributed music for numerous TV shows and films, one of which (the soundtrack for Sean Penn's* Into the Wild*) received a Golden Globe nomination (along with contributors Eddie Vedder and Michael Brook).* Rolling Stone *named King one of "The New Guitar Gods," of which she was both the youngest and the only-woman listed.*

I was an outcast. I was a gay kid in an alt-Christian high school in Atlanta, Georgia, and I think if I had been born a decade later, in a different town, my life would've been extremely different. I may not have been the misfit, I may have been the cool kid! How strange would that have been? But playing guitar by myself was this healing thing, and one day I looked up and was like, "Oh, I really know what I'm doing on this instrument," despite having one parent who was supportive and one who wasn't.

Most of the time, I never feel more like a woman in the music industry—that it's a prominent part of my identity—than when I'm being asked about being a woman in the music industry. I feel like, "Do I want to be a team player and speak about the female experience?" And at the same time, I feel like I'm cheating my story and cheating other women out of hearing something that they can identify with.



KAKI KING



'I NEVER FEEL MORE LIKE A WOMAN IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY THAN WHEN I'M BEING ASKED ABOUT BEING A WOMAN IN THE MUSIC INDUSTRY.'
KAKI KING

Maybe that's part of the problem—there's so much like, "I'm just gonna keep my head down and do good work and hope I don't get any sh*t for it." That's always been my goal. To deflect everything by being undeniably excellent. And that's really, really hard. I've worked extremely hard to do that and I wonder if I hadn't put that pressure on myself, what my music would've ended up like.

For the first time in my life, I'm acknowledging these mixed feelings and trying to understand them to be more productive in the conversation, because before I have said, "Yeah, I'm a woman, but it doesn't matter." And I think that's taking away from the experiences of women for whom it does matter. At the same time, it's a lie to say, "It's hard and men are the worst" because that's not true, and I've met so many awesome and supportive men in my career.

We all know that women are discriminated against and it's already been a generation since the women's movement of the '60s and '70s, like we're the daughters of that movement. Equality is gonna take some time, but let's acknowledge that there's inequality in almost every single industry and speak to that.

WHAT SHE PLAYS:
Kaki King Signature Ovation.

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Matron Saints



1. ELIZABETH COTTEN

Elizabeth "Libba" Cotten wrote her enduring classic "Freight Train" at age 12, after saving up money for a guitar by stoking a neighbor's iron stove for $1 a day. A southpaw performing in the Piedmont folk-blues style, Cotten taught herself to play by flipping a right-handed guitar upside-down, picking out bass lines with her index finger while using her thumb for melodies, in a style that bore her name Cotten picking and would become widely known and emulated. After giving up the guitar for 25 years (she cared for the children of Ruth Crawford Seeger and Charles Seeger), Cotten resumed playing at 68 and began her long-delayed recording career on Folkways Records. She played until shortly before her death in 1987.

2. MAYBELLE CARTER

"Mother" Maybelle Carter is responsible for creating the concept of a lead guitarist. A founding member of the pioneering Carter Family in the late 1920s, she developed the Carter scratch—using her thumb to pick bass notes and her index finger for rhythmic strums and melody lines—to fill out the trio's sound. Before Carter, the guitar was thought of as simply a tool for background rhythm, not the focal point. By the end of the '20s, writes historians Charles K. Wolfe and Ted Olson in their book *The Bristol Sessions: Writings About the Big Bang of Country Music*, the Carter scratch "was the most widely imitated guitar style in music. Nobody did as much to popularize the guitar, because from the beginning, her playing was distinctive as any voice."





3. SISTER ROSETTA THARPE

At a time when mainstream female guitarists were rare, Sister Rosetta Tharpe was a pop star of the '30s and '40s. Tharpe started performing at age four, billed as "the singing and guitar playing miracle," and accompanied her mandolin-playing mother at church and at tent revivals in Arkansas. By 23, she was signed to Decca Records, producing solo and orchestra-backed acoustic albums on her Gibson L-5 and National archtop and steel guitars. Though she went electric in 1947, her early acoustic work—blending gospel with the blues and jazz she discovered after her family moved to Chicago—set the template for what would become modern rock 'n' roll and R&B.

6 LEGENDARY GUITARISTS WHO REVOLUTIONIZED MUSIC AS WE KNOW IT

BY ANNA PULLEY & WHITNEY PHANEUF



4. ALICE GERRARD

In Alice Gerrard's 50-plus year career, she has been a tireless crusader for Americana, Appalachian, and mountain music. The success of her collaboration with Hazel Dickens in the '60s and '70s proved women were a force to be reckoned with in the bluegrass scene at a time when men dominated the genre. The duo performed songs about the struggles of everyday life, particularly for women. "I gravitate toward the darker material in traditional music, and I guess in my own songs too," the 82-year-old told *NPR*. "I've never had much success writing a funny song, or anything like that. The high, lonesome sound is what appeals to me."

5. JONI MITCHELL

"When I'm playing the guitar, I hear it as an orchestra: the top three strings being my horn section, the bottom three being cello, viola, and the bass being indicated but not rooted yet," Joni Mitchell told AG in 1996, of her distinctive guitar style. The fiercely independent artist burst into the American consciousness during the '60s, "battling male egos" and a cutthroat music industry, and has continued to defend her musical reputation, inspire millions, and expand the guitar's sonic possibilities. Mitchell's guitar playing spans a dizzying array of more than 50 alternate tunings, which she uniquely categorizes based on the number of half steps between the notes of adjacent strings.



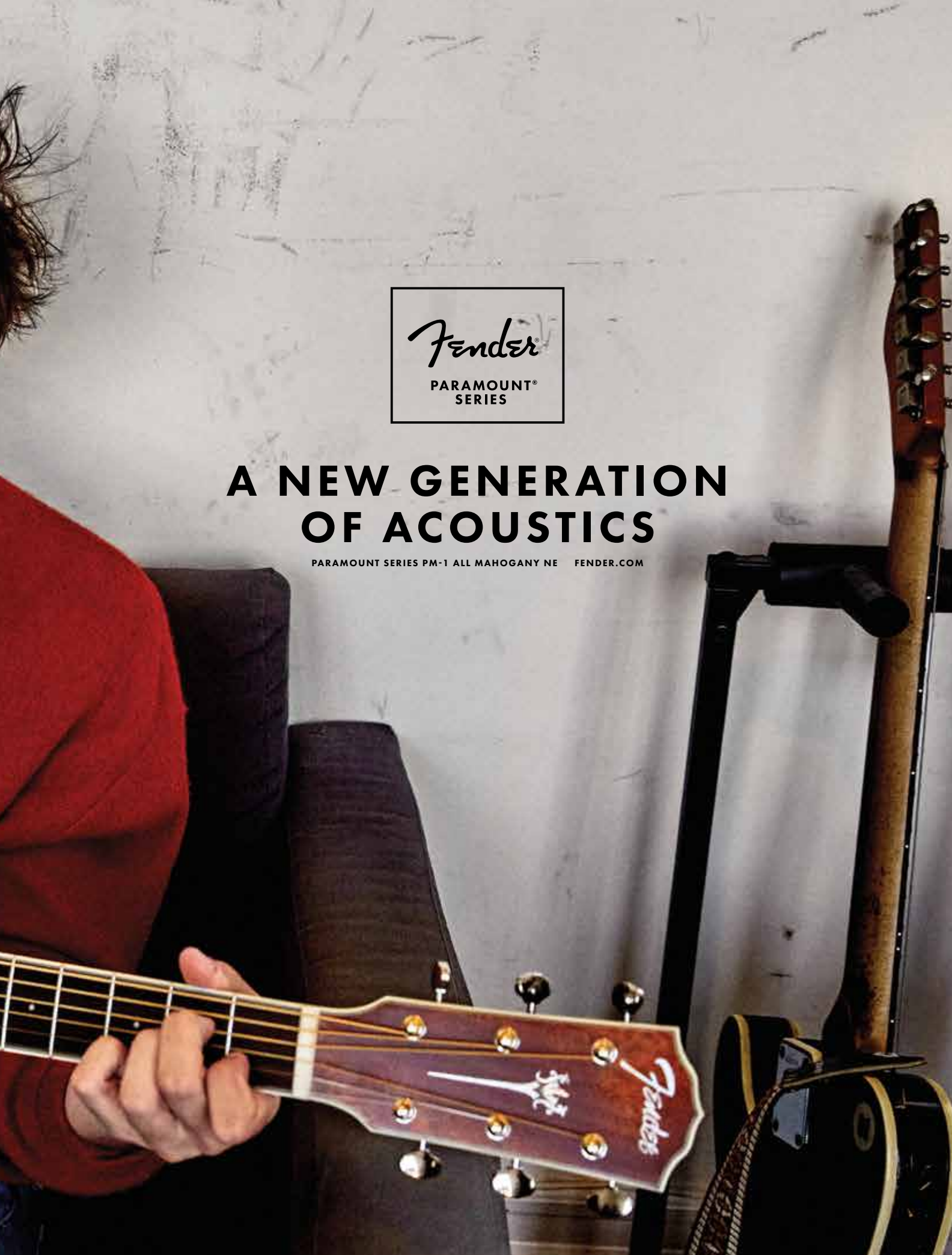


6. JOAN BAEZ

"Queen of Folk" Joan Baez, singer-songwriter, activist, and guitarist often performs with only a Martin to accompany her sterling soprano. Baez made her major debut at the 1959 Newport Folk Festival, and every day since has been at the forefront of the fight to create social change throughout the United States, from Vietnam to prison reform to LGBTQ equality. "People say music changes the world but the guitar, of all the instruments, is played everywhere," Baez says in a *Craft in America* documentary. "They've served their purpose of uniting people." Next month, Baez will be inducted into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (read more on p. 15).



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HERE'S HOW

MEGHAN MCMACKIN

Time Management Tips for Guitar Teachers

4 ways to juggle the demands of gigs, lessons & life

BY PAULINE FRANCE

As guitar teachers, you can be self-sacrificing for your beloved students, getting them ready for open houses, learning hundreds of songs for them, and more. That's your job, and you love it as you love them. But are you taking care of your needs along the way?

Here are some practical ways to make yourself a priority without neglecting your guitar "kiddos." After all, at the end of the day, you are your own greatest asset.

1 LET GO OF YOUR GUILT

Think about the last time you were on a flight. During the safety speech, the flight attendant said that if there was a change in cabin pressure you should put on *your* oxygen mask *first* before helping others. What does this have to do with time management for guitar teachers? *You* come before others or other things, like gigs, students, and band mates, because if you're not in good shape, how can you help those around you? With this in mind, remember that it's OK to turn down a last-minute request from a student for a makeup lesson, or to say no to your friend asking you on short notice to fill in at a gig, if it inconveniences you.

This doesn't make you selfish—it just means you know how much you and your time are worth.

2 TIME IS A PERISHABLE COMMODITY

At some point in your teaching career, you might have told yourself things like, "I wish I had more hours in the day," or "I could use another month to prepare for this recital." But as the saying goes, you have the same amount of hours in a day as Beyoncé. "This is a dollars-for-hours kind of job," says Rob Hampton, owner of Heartwood Guitar Instruction in Seattle, a respected teacher and accomplished

musician who applied time-management skills to his teaching business, becoming one of the most successful private instructors in the area. "It's about making enough money, so that you have enough free time to take care of yourself."

In other words, charge premium rates, and make sure your students are getting their money's worth by offering them the best lessons in return.

Also, take advantage of the internet's time-saving qualities. Mike Gross, founder of rockingguitarlessons.com, found a way to eliminate the commute from student to student by building a successful online teaching business that allowed more time for himself. "I used to have my own music academy where my wife and I would hold annual music recitals," Gross says. "Through my website, I created a feature called Custom Video Tablature lessons in which I take a particular song for a student, transcribe it, and do a video along with the tablature."

Time that would've been spent driving is now being invested in himsel and his students. Gross says that he also uses slots where students are no-shows for practicing songs and his scales.

3 PREPARE IN ADVANCE

Hampton penned a book called *Rob's Totally Awesome Guitar Teaching Handbook,* in which he shares pearls of wisdom he's learned throughout his 13 years of teaching, including tips on time management and more. In his book, Hampton recommends applying principles from Stephen Covey's *7 Habits of Highly Effective People* into your business and life in general.

In other words, charge premium rates, and make sure your students are getting their money's worth by offering them the best lessons in return.

"I was a total mess, and Covey's book saved my life," Hampton says. "It was a path forward of not only organizing my guitar-teaching schedule, but organizing my life. It was a big turning point for me."

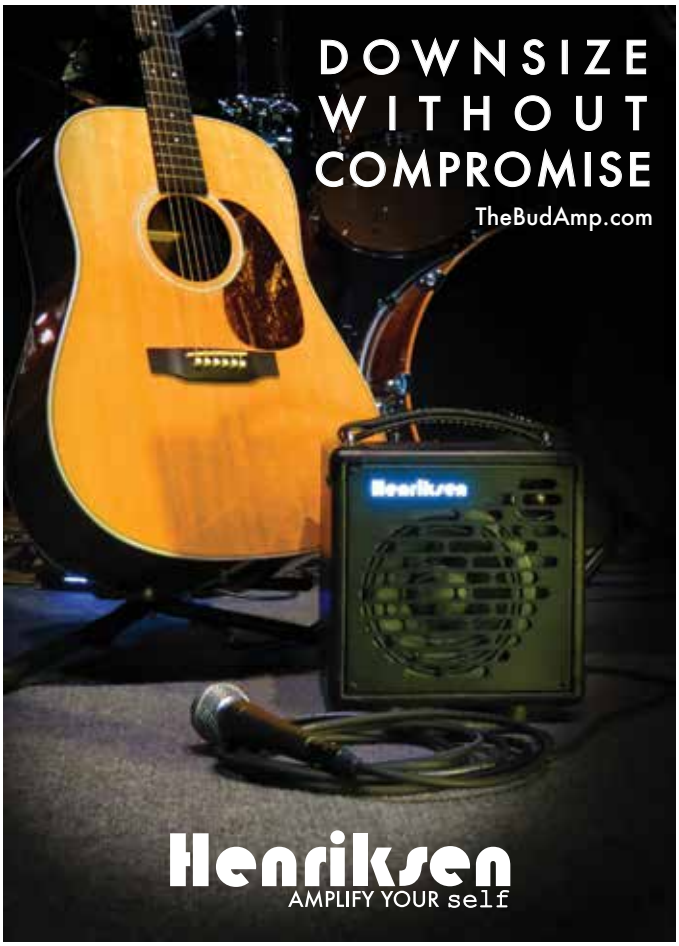
Prepare in advance and save your work as you go, so that parts of your teaching process become automated. "The amount of prep time that I've put into my lessons has decreased dramatically," Hampton says. "It's relatively unusual that students come to me asking for a song that I don't already have."

Hampton boasts more than 700 charts he's transcribed for his students, and doesn't have to re-write for the next one who comes along.

4 CHALLENGE YOUR INNER STUDENT

Imagine teaching "Three Blind Mice" or "Mary Had a Little Lamb" to 40 students a week. Do you think that's going to take your playing to the next level? Probably not.

"Almost all the practice I do these days is learning my students' songs," Hampton says. "Attract students who want to learn material that will challenge and interest you. That way, when you're preparing for your lessons, you're also developing your own musical skills." AG







Ease Away Any Unwanted Blues

These simple tips can help you build on your bottleneck-slide technique

BY PETE MADSEN

PROBLEM

You can't get a powerful sound playing bottleneck slide—your tone is thin.

SOLUTION

There are several things one can do to get a good slide sound: Set up your guitar with heavier strings, use an open tuning, try different kinds of slides, dampen the strings, and learn to properly intonate. Getting a good sound is often as much a function of proper setup as it is technique. Some guitarists like to raise the action on a cheap guitar and put on heavy gauge strings—guitars with low action and light-gauge strings make it difficult to get a good tone because the extra weight of the slide can bang into the fretboard and produce unwanted sounds.

For bottleneck style, you want the strings to be a little above the fretboard, but not too much. I've seen guitar stores that sell guitars with damaged necks as "slide" guitars because it's impossible to press down on the string and play in tune. Avoid these.

SETUP & TUNING

If you're used to playing light strings, try a medium (13–56) set. Some guitarists like to swap out the E and B strings with gauges as heavy as 15 and 17. Be careful if you do that, because it will put extra tension on the neck and top of your guitar. If you use heavier strings, you might counteract the extra tension by tuning down to open G (D G D G B D), for example. Conversely, with light strings you can tune up to open A (E A E A C♯ E)—the relationship of the strings to each other is the same in open G and open A tunings, so musical ideas can easily be transferred between the tunings.

As for string height, you can place a shim under the saddle at the bridge, which should raise your action just enough to achieve a good sound. You can also buy a nut extender that you slide under the strings and which covers the nut. However, this might raise the action so high that it is impossible to fret the guitar normally.

MATERIALS & SIZE

Slides come in a wide range of shapes, sizes, and materials. The best slide for you is a personal choice, both in terms of sound and comfort. After years of playing slide guitar, I've come to the conclusion that there are different slides for different applications. On the acoustic guitar, go for a slide with some mass: thick glass and ceramic slides work nicely, as do thick brass and steel. The more mass, the more sound. If you play fingerstyle in open tuning, choose a slide that is long enough to cover all the strings, at least 2 ½ inches in length. On the other hand, if you play mostly single-string and double-stop licks, then consider a smaller slide.

If it's not too cost prohibitive, buy a small collection of different slides to see what works best for you. Slides are generally inexpensive, and there are plenty of good options in the $10–$20 range.

TECHNIQUE & INTONATION

Now that your guitar is set up and you've got a slide, it's time to play! The following exercises are all in open-G tuning. As your slide touches the string, keep in mind that you don't need to apply much pressure: It's more important to keep *consistent* pressure as you slide from note to note. The slide should only cover the strings

that you are playing slide notes on. For example, if you're making a melody on the high E string, only cover that single string with the slide. A lot of slide playing occurs on the high E, and these tips will help you get a good sound. As you move from note to note, target the fretwire itself, rather than playing between the frets as you would when fretting conventionally. Finally, tilt the slide slightly away from your body and the fretboard, thus avoiding other strings and unwanted overtones.

STRING DAMPING

A critical aspect of slide playing is string dampening, which can be achieved with both hands. There are times when you want string noise and overtones and there are times when you don't. These tips are for avoiding those sounds. First, as you drag the slide across the strings, use one or more of your fretting fingers to touch and drag along that string behind the slide. I tend to use my first finger, which results in a slight cupping of my hand. This cupping also tends to consolidate your hand, making it feel as if it's one appendage rather than five independent digits.

BEGINNING OPEN-G EXERCISES

In **Ex. 1** on p. 49, practice moving the slide between notes of the G minor pentatonic scale. Make sure to keep your slide low, just covering the first string. Timing is not important. Just try to get a good, even sound, using your slide and damping finger.

In **Ex. 2** use the same pentatonic scale, but work the third string. This will require you to "dip" the slide in. It's okay to cover the first and second strings as well, but listen carefully: if it's not pleasing to you, then you might need to angle the slide in so that you are not touching the top two strings. In **Ex. 3** and **4**, play on multiple strings. Make sure your slide is *not* tilted, so that all the strings have an even sound.

Ex. 5 offers a chance to vary the length of the slide notes. The first few notes are quick, but then the slide lingers a bit over the second string as you slide between the 10th and 12th frets. As you develop your slide playing, consider the difference between long vs. short, decay vs. sustain, and when to cut the note off with either your left or right hand.

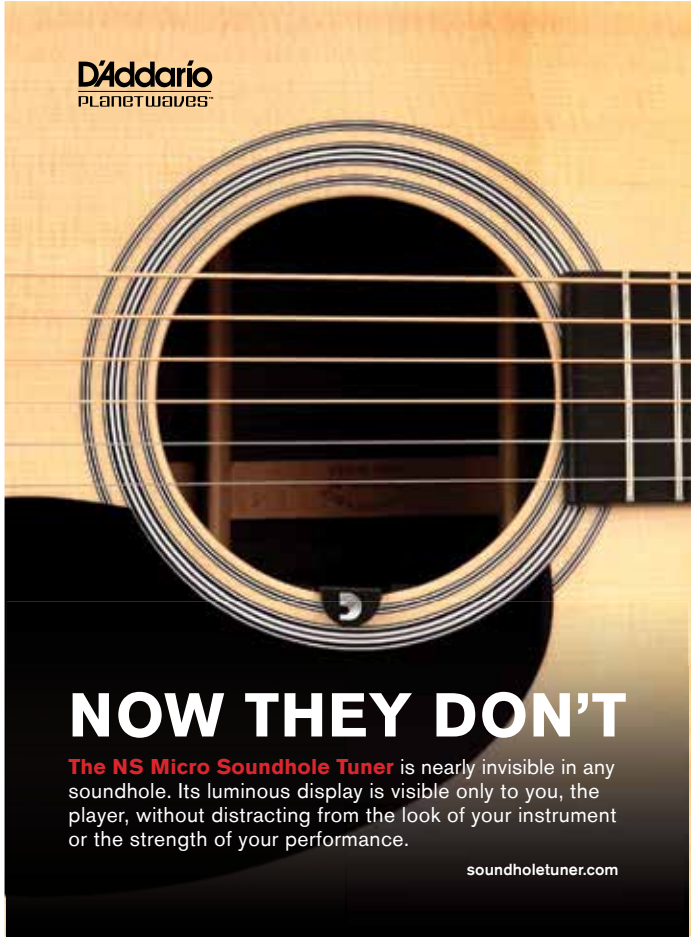
Ex. 6 is an exercise in playing long and short slide notes. Cover the same territory between the third and eighth frets, but initially play the slide quickly and then stop the sound almost immediately. (Use your picking-hand palm or your fretting-hand damping finger.) On the second attempt, lengthen the note, taking your time getting from the third fret to the eighth fret. Notice the contrast and get familiar with both techniques.

Ex. 7 is a 12-bar solo in the key of G. The first four bars are played over a G7 chord. Basically, this portion of the solo travels between G octaves: high G on the fifth fret of the first string, down to the open third string, G. When the progression travels to C and D, you can simply follow the chords to the fifth and seventh frets, respectively, working your slide lick above and below those frets. The last two bars of the solo are a turnaround that you can use in any G blues.

Be patient as you work to get a good sound with the slide. Listen to recordings by as many players as you can—Robert Johnson, Son House, Charlie Patton, Alvin Youngblood Hart, Kelly Joe Phelps, among others—and try to emulate the sounds they get.
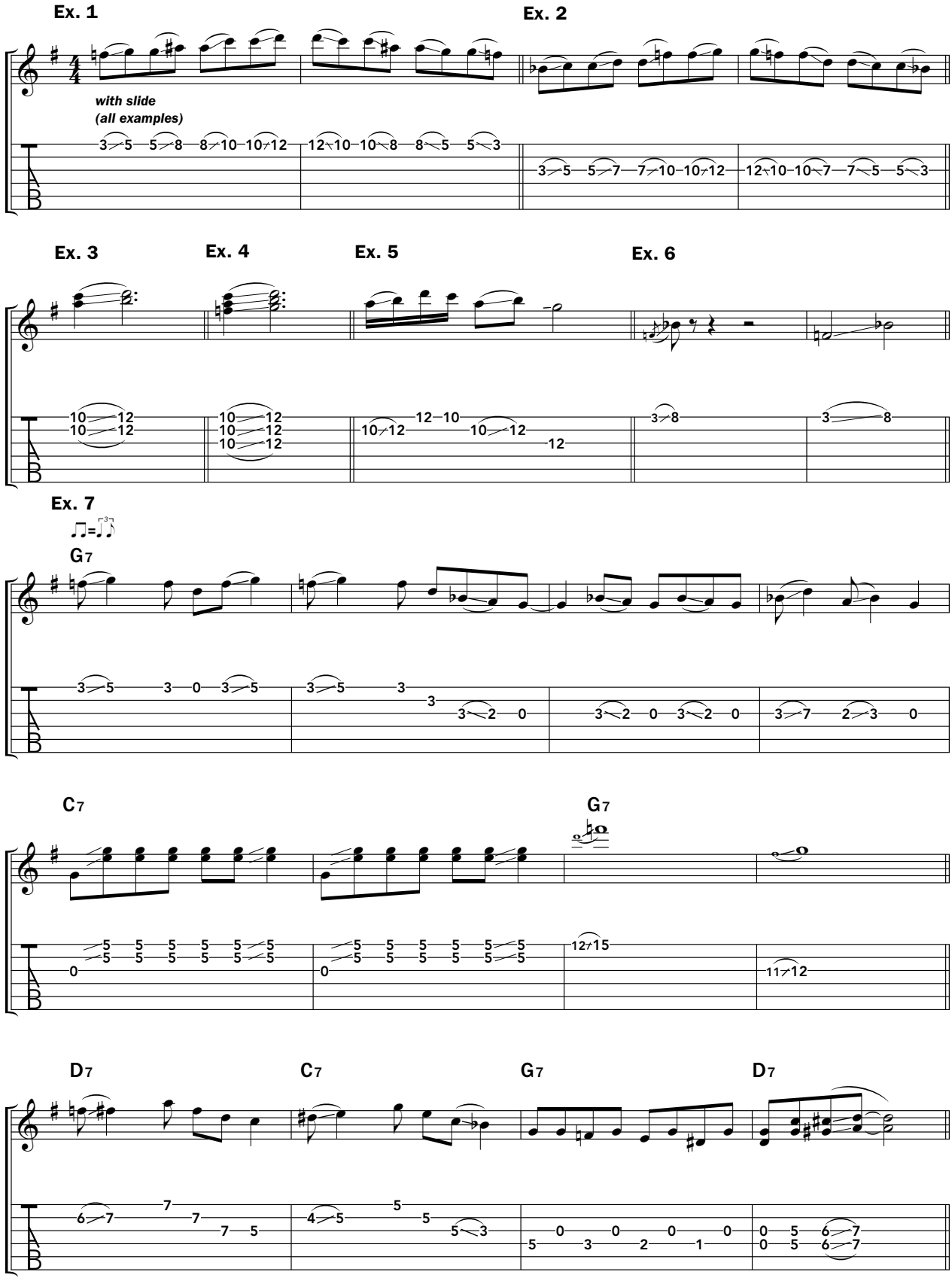
Cont. on p. 48





Cont. from p. 47

Tuning: D G D G B D



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John Dowland

Renaissance Man

Digging into a lute arrangement by the English Renaissance composer John Dowland

BY ADAM PERLMUTTER

As a fingerstyle steel-string guitarist, you might assume that your instrument precludes learning classical literature, which is traditionally performed on the nylon-string guitar. But this isn't actually the case. You might not have the appropriate timbre in tackling a classical piece on, say, your OM. But you can enjoy a refreshing change of pace from your normal repertoire while absorbing techniques and ideas that you can use in your own music—regardless of your genre of specialty.

In this lesson, you'll do just that with a guitar arrangement of "Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home," based on Renaissance composer John Dowland's lute arrangement of a traditional English ballad. Work through the examples, which highlight some of the concepts at work in the piece, before tackling it in its entirety. Use that OM, dreadnought, or even resonator—whatever works.

THE COMPONENTS AT PLAY

"Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home" is commonly played in A minor in standard tuning on the guitar, but I have arranged it in a non-standard tuning. Lower your third string a half step, to F♯ from G, and place a capo at the third fret. Your guitar's open strings will now match that of a Renaissance lute. You'll finger the music in the key of A minor, but everything in the notation—and in this text—will sound a minor third higher than written, in the key of C minor.

As for your pick hand, don't worry about classical techniques like the free stroke and the rest stroke. You can approach the music as you would any fingerstyle piece: Using your bare fingers, or even a thumb pick and fingers, pick the notes on strings 6–4 with your thumb and those on the higher string with your index, middle, and ring fingers.

On the lute, Dowland's music is historically played with such ornaments as grace notes. These aren't always shown in notation, but are included here for your convenience. Often the grace notes involve a pair of notes before the main note, as shown in the small notes of **Ex. 1**. Start by fretting the C on string 2; quickly hammer on the D and pull off to the C, squarely on beat 1. Repeat the process, but using the first-string A and B, on beat 3. In both instances, make sure that you cleanly articulate the grace notes. Try playing them with other pitches, and on other strings as well. Not only can ornaments like this spruce up any melody, they provide a good workout for your fretting fingers.

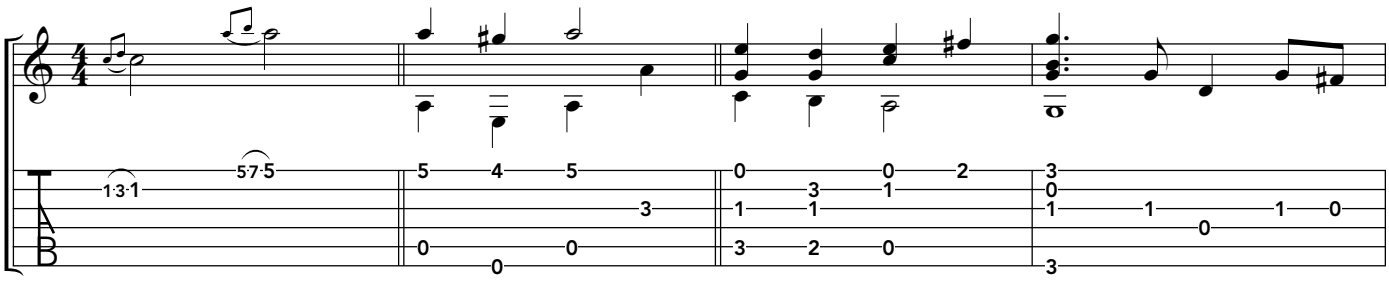
Renaissance music predates harmony as it is thought of today—that is, in terms of vertical structures. But that's not to say it can't be analyzed on your own terms.

Renaissance music predates harmony as it is thought of today—that is, in terms of vertical structures. But that's not to say it can't be analyzed on your own terms. For example, in **Ex. 2**, a i–V–i (Am–E–Am) progression is implied. On beats 1 and 3, the A's suggest the i chord, while on beat 3, the E–G♯ pair forms the V chord. The takeaway here is that you don't need four, five, or six strings to make a chord. Just two notes make for a nice uncluttered sound that's appropriate for many styles.

On the guitar, the melody is often played on the top strings while supportive voices fall

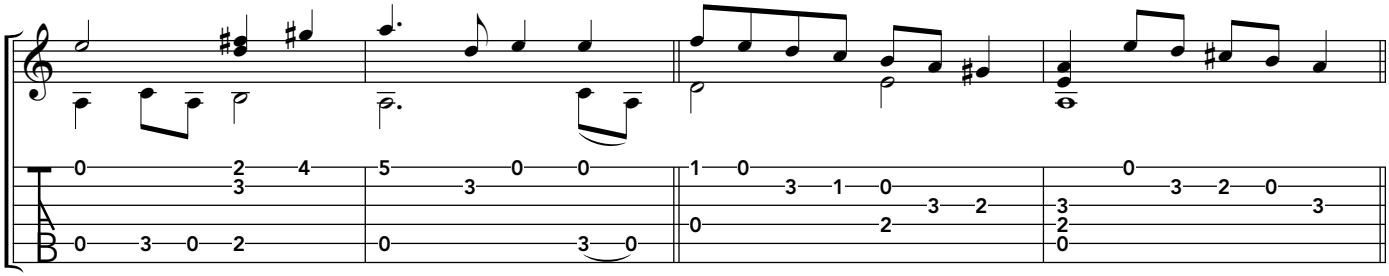
Ex. 1 **Ex. 2** **Ex. 3**

***Tuning: E A D F♯ B E, Capo III**
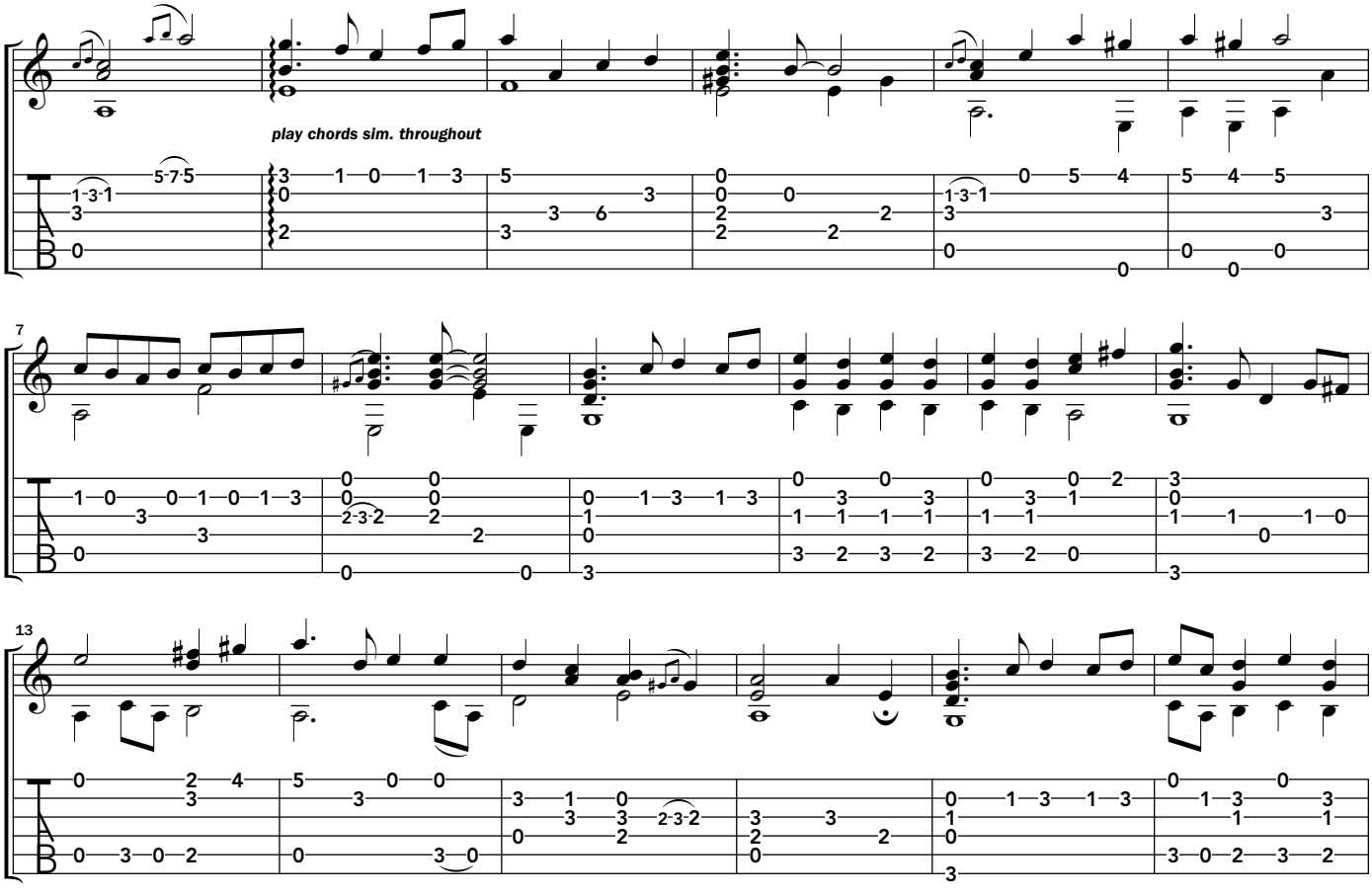


***All examples; music sounds a minor third higher than written.**

Ex. 4
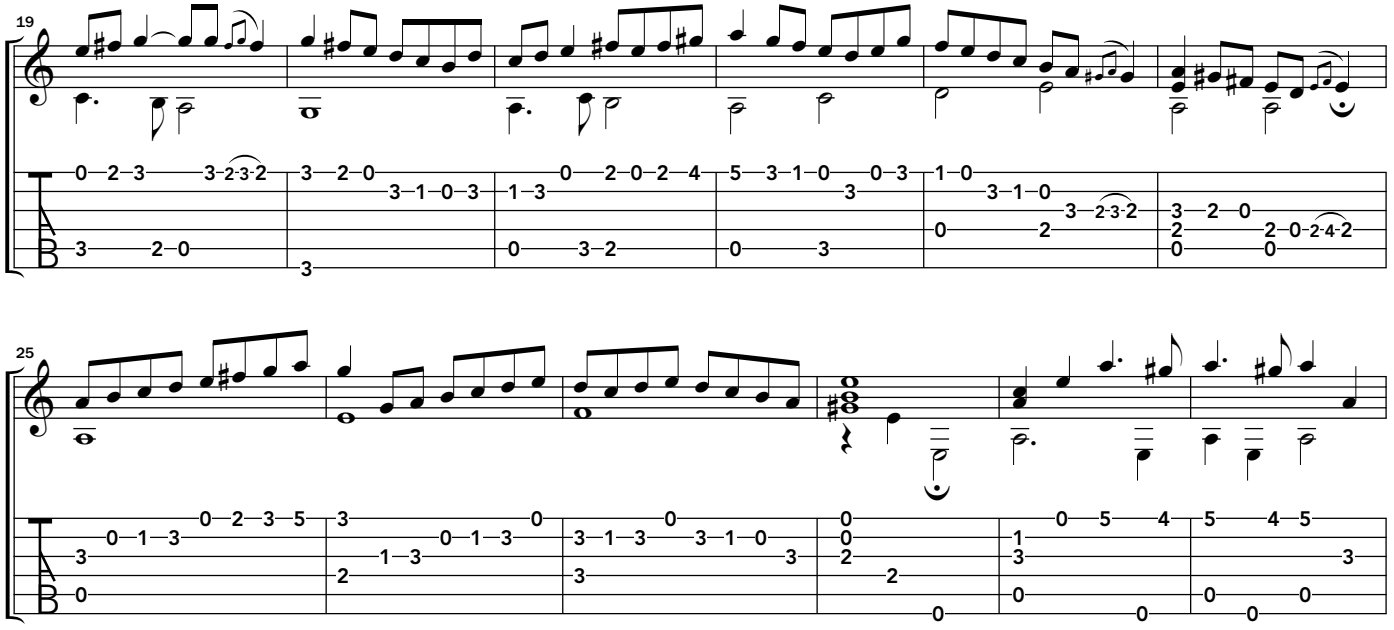


Ex. 5

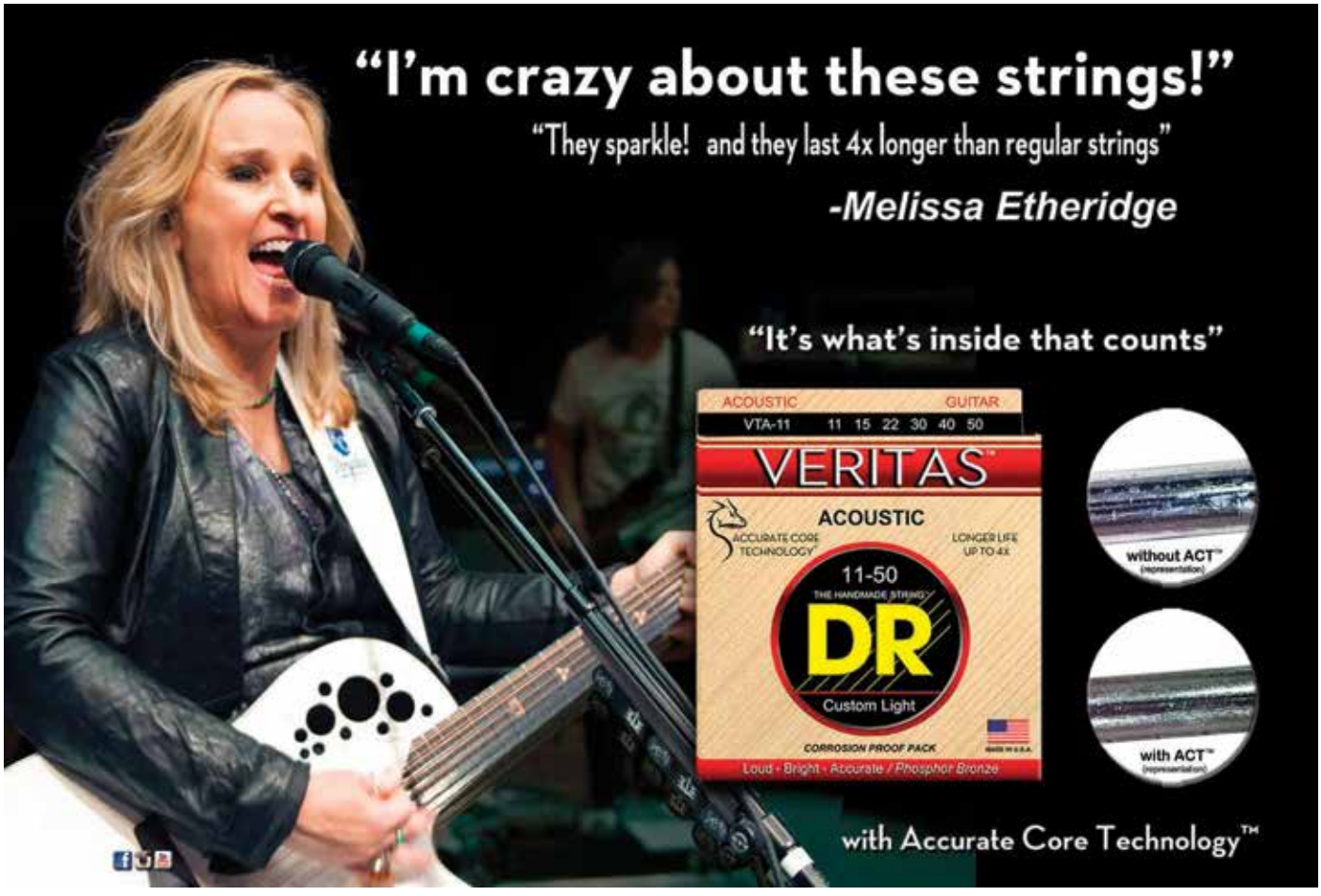
“Lord Willoughby’s Welcome Home”



Cont. on p. 52

Ex. 5 cont.


19
25


"I'm crazy about these strings!"
"They sparkle! and they last 4x longer than regular strings"
-Melissa Etheridge
"It's what's inside that counts"
ACOUSTIC GUITAR
VTA-11 11 15 22 30 40 50
VERITAS
ACOUSTIC
ACCURATE CORE TECHNOLOGY
LONGER LIFE UP TO 4X
11-50
THE HANDMADE STRING
DR
Custom Light
CORROSION PROOF PACK
Loud • Bright • Accurate / Phosphor Bronze
without ACT
with ACT
with Accurate Core Technology™

on the lower strings. But in a Renaissance piece like "Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home," different registers take on equal weight. In the first bar of **Ex. 3**, for example, the melody falls on the top two strings. It's then passed to the middle and lower registers before returning to the upper strings in the last measure.

While much popular repertoire for fingerstyle guitar is harmonically predictable, there are unexpected moments in "Lord Willoughby"—namely the occasional appearance of an A-major chord in place of A minor, like in the second measure of **Ex. 4**, adding a hint of brightness. This harmonic technique is known as mode mixture—the A-major chord is borrowed from A minor's parallel major key, A major. It's an excellent tool to have at your disposal for composing or improvising in any style.

THE WHOLE HOG

Once you've worked through Ex. 1 through Ex. 4, try "Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home" in its entirety (**Ex. 5**). If you're up for it, do a little harmonic analysis of the piece before playing it. Bar 1 implies an A-minor chord; bar 2, E minor; bar 3, F; bar 4, E; and so on.
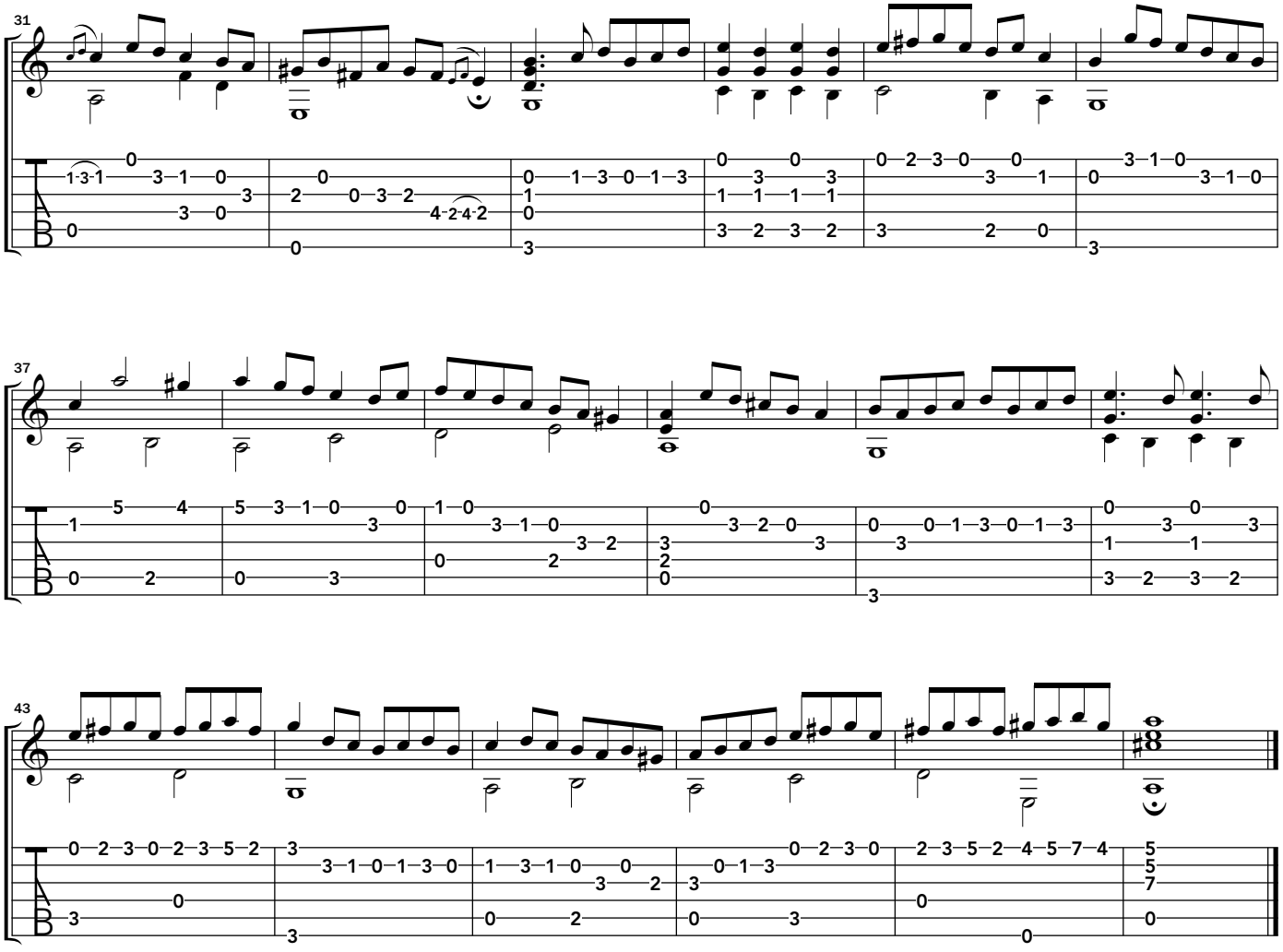
Given the lowered third string, take things slowly—and bar by bar—when learning the piece. Experiment with fingerings to find out what works best for you. For example, in bar 1, on beat 1, you might play the third- and first-fret notes with your third and first fingers, respectively, doing the hammer-on and pull-off with your fourth finger. Try measure 3 with a partial first-finger barre at fret 3, your third finger on the fifth-fret A, and your fourth finger handling the sixth-fret C.

Throughout, remember to play the grace notes quickly, slightly before the main notes. Make sure that the grace notes don't disrupt the rhythmic flow of the piece. If they prove problematic, you can simply omit them, as is often done in modern performances of lute arrangements like this.

Experiment with dynamics as you see fit—you might play gradually louder during phrases with ascending motion and more quietly during descending passages. And, as directed by the fermata signs (semicircles with dots), give the last note of certain phrases a little extra duration.

Your next task is less straightforward, but potentially more rewarding: Take some of what you've come across in learning "Lord Willoughby's Welcome Home"—whether the lute tuning, the chord voicings, the mode mixture, or any of the other ideas—and apply it to your own acoustic-guitar music. **AG**

Ex. 5 cont.



All Together Now

These fundamental techniques will help you learn to synchronize your hands

BY SEAN McGOWAN

All musicians, regardless of their instruments, must develop a considerable amount of technique to be able to play their favorite songs and explore new repertoire in a variety of styles. Once a musician has developed technical proficiency, he or she must continue to maintain fluency and work on new techniques. String players, woodwind, and brass players all have volumes of études, which they use to develop and maintain intonation, embouchure, and articulation.

As guitarists, you need to focus on developing speed, control, and—most important—good tone, by working on picking and fretting techniques. This Weekly Workout will show how to synchronize the hands through a variety of exercises, concepts, and articulations: everything you need to play guitar effortlessly and beautifully.

Beginners' Tip #1

Week 1: Accent (or emphasize) the first note of each measure to keep your time solid. Then, do the same with the first note of each beat.

WEEK ONE

Concentrate on alternate picking, one string at a time, while developing independence with the fretting fingers through chromatic exercises. **Ex. 1** is a short chromatic exercise that gets all four fingers moving up and down the fingerboard. Pay attention to the suggested fingerings in all of these examples, and employ strict alternate picking throughout. Each chromatic line is broken up with a quarter-note rest. This is important, as you're developing the action/rest concept with your hands.

Ex. 2 removes the rest for more of a constant velocity exercise. This one is all about slow and steady—keep your fretting fingers close to the neck for economical movement, and slightly curved, as if you're holding an orange in the palm of your hand. Your picking hand should remain relaxed, but the pick should be held with a firm grip. Focus on picking up and down *through* the string, striving for clarity of sound and good volume. Both of these examples can and should be played on all six strings.

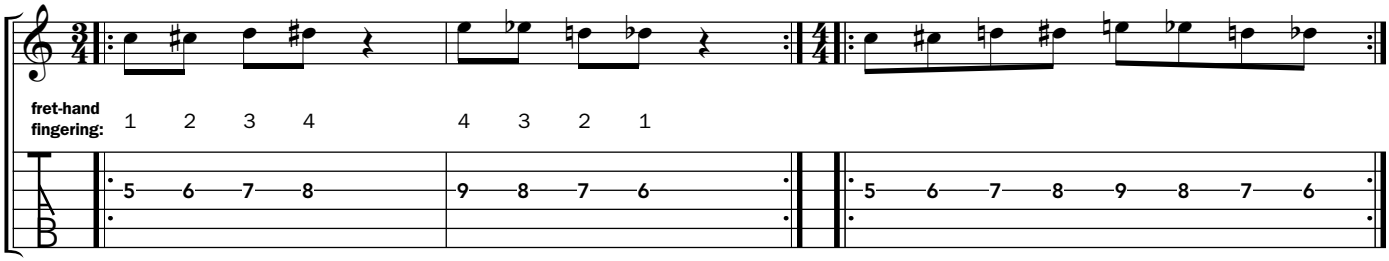
Ex. 3 offers a few variations by crossing over to other strings and fingering combinations. Stay in position, and keep one finger per fret over a four-fret span. The third and fourth measures cross over three strings, but continue to use alternate picking throughout. **Ex. 4** is another variation that starts out the same, but alternates between fretted notes and open strings in the second and fourth measures—a great way to synchronize the

Beginners' Tip #2

Try the first couple of examples in higher positions on the fretboard. These will require less stretching on your fretting hand. After you're comfortable with the basic exercises, move down to positions I through III to get some good stretching in the workout.

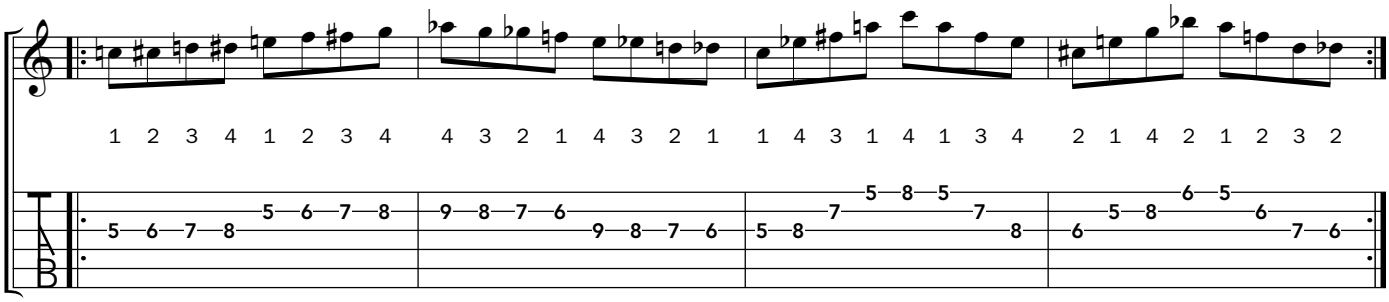
WEEK 1

Ex. 1



Ex. 2

Ex. 3



hands. If any of these exercises are difficult at first, remember to take the tempo down and practice slowly, with conviction.

This week's exercises conclude in **Ex. 5** with the concept of speed bursts. Your fretting hand is still alternating up and down between two adjacent strings, but now switching between eighth and 16th notes. Practice this at a tempo where the 16ths sound clear and effortless. This reinforces the contrast between action and rest in Ex. 1, while adding the element of a speed burst with the 16th notes. You could also do the exercise alternating between eighth notes and eighth-note triplets, or eighth-note triplets and straight 16th notes.

WEEK TWO

It's time to explore some of the same concepts, but with challenging variations in terms of fingerings. **Ex. 6** is another velocity exercise between two strings, with new fingering combinations, both ascending and descending. You'll likely find these more difficult than the simple chromatic fingerings. Take your time and also feel free to explore additional permutations (for example, 1-3-4-2 and 2-4-3-1; 1-4-2-3 and 3-2-4-1, and so on).

Ex. 7 and **Ex. 8** mix up a variety of these variations while crossing and skipping strings—essential flatpicking techniques. Stick with alternate picking at first, and then feel free to explore consecutive or directional picking when needed. **Ex. 9** works through open triads across the neck with some challenging string skipping. Try alternate picking at first, though you might prefer to use consecutive downstrokes for the first two notes of each triad, followed by an upstroke for the top note.

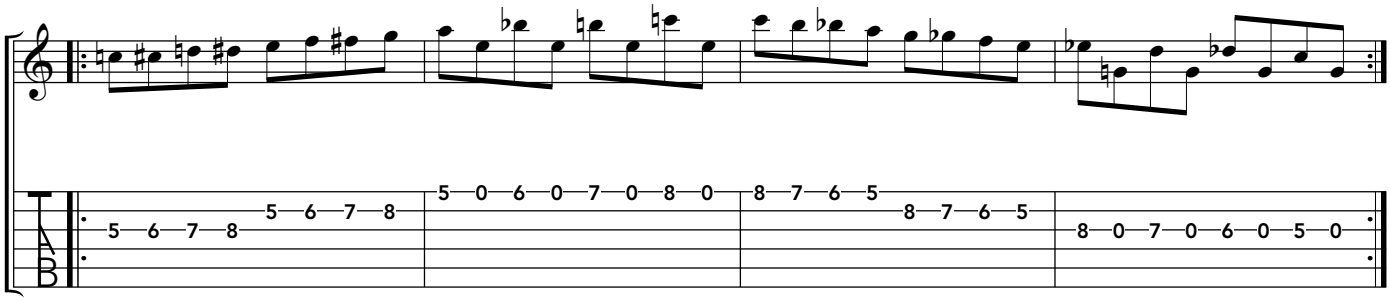
WEEK THREE

The examples from the past two weeks will do wonders for synchronizing the hands, but they don't exactly sound musical. It's important to balance technical exercises with *real music*—that's the point of études! Compared to other instruments, there aren't as many études (aside from classical-guitar music) to draw from to develop picking, fretting, and synchronizing. Many contemporary guitarists—

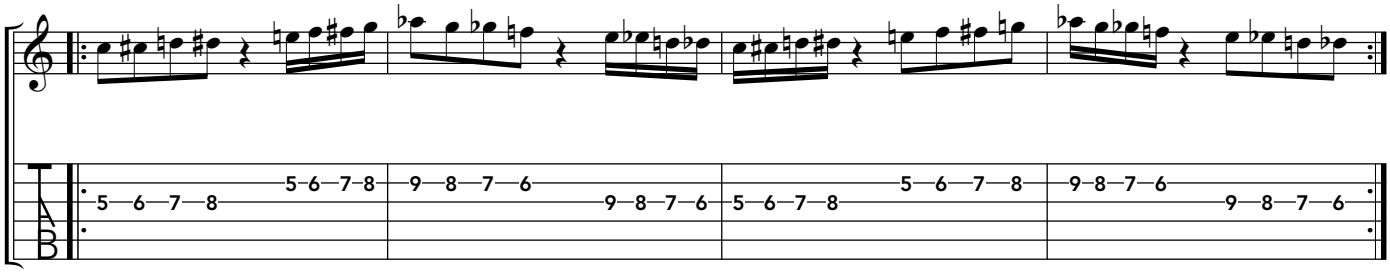
Beginners' Tip #3

Isolate and repeat each measure of both examples—these will give you mini exercises to develop your technique.

Ex. 4

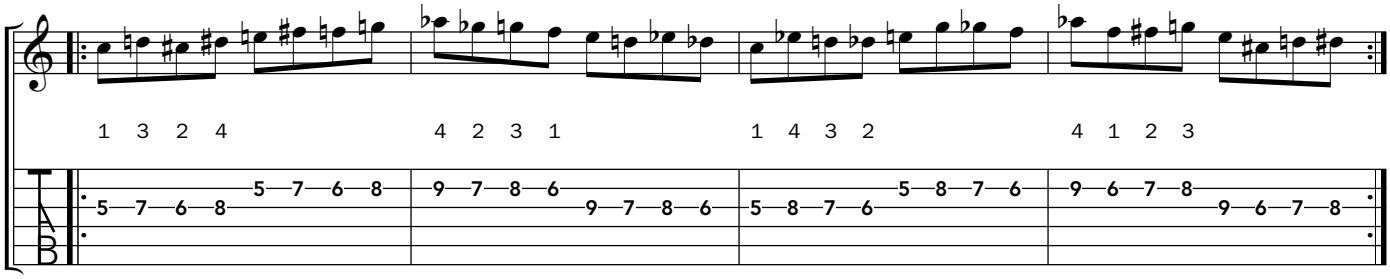


Ex. 5



WEEK 2

Ex. 6



regardless of their style—turn to J.S. Bach's works for violin, cello, and piano to practice technique *and* play beautiful music.

You may also try composing your own examples that focus on developing and/or improving a particular technique. **Ex. 10** is a highly chromatic line that works over a C-minor chord. The technical emphasis is on picking five notes on one string (requiring the fretting hand to shift) in both directions, and also rapid string crossing in the second measure. **Ex. 11** adds speed bursts to this five-note-per-string concept. The challenge in this example is to keep all of the bursts smooth on every string. Playing on the bottom three strings will require you to move your pick a little higher and to adjust your hand posture slightly.

Beginners' Tip #4

Record these examples to ensure that you're playing with good tone and time. Try tracking the chord changes separately, and then practicing the melodies over the chords to hear how they sound. Finally, take a stab at composing your own hand-synchronization études over various chord progressions.

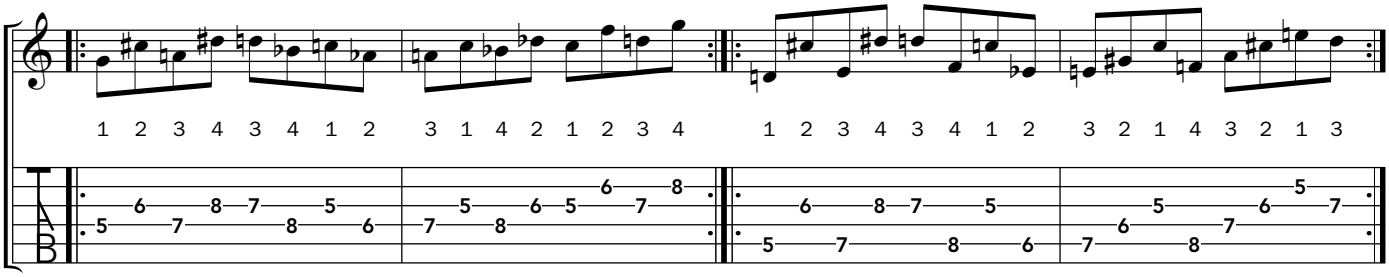
WEEK FOUR

Now that you've practiced a variety of fingering permutations, string crossing/skipping, and position shifting, you're ready to tackle something that is technically challenging yet musical. **Ex. 12** outlines a basic chord progression with a singular melodic line, while also incorporating a variety of techniques. Note the position shifting in measures 2, 4, and 6, and remember to keep your entire arm relaxed while moving back and forth on the neck.

Ex. 13 adds some variety in terms of articulation with pull-offs to the open G string in the first two measures, and some half-step sliding in the second and fifth measures. When handling the pull-offs in measure 4, your fretting hand will gradually move *up* the neck while moving *down* the strings.

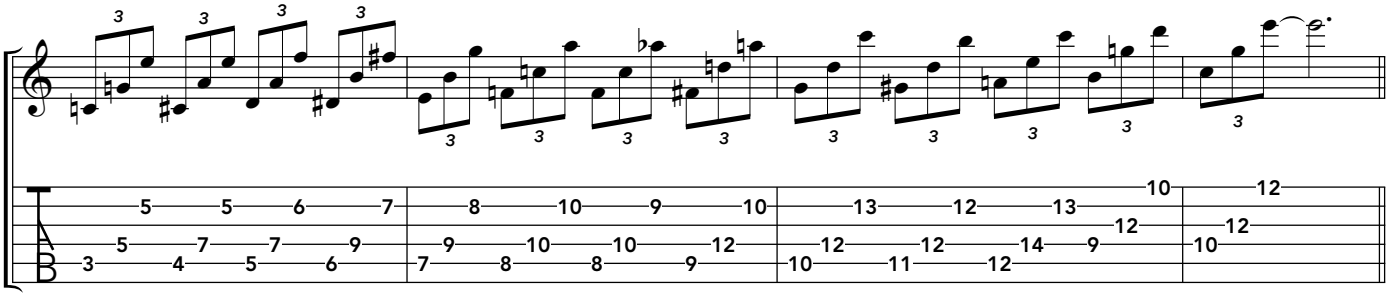
Sean McGowan is a jazz and acoustic guitarist based in Denver, where he directs the guitar program at the University of Colorado Denver. seanmcgowanguitar.com

Ex. 7



Ex. 8

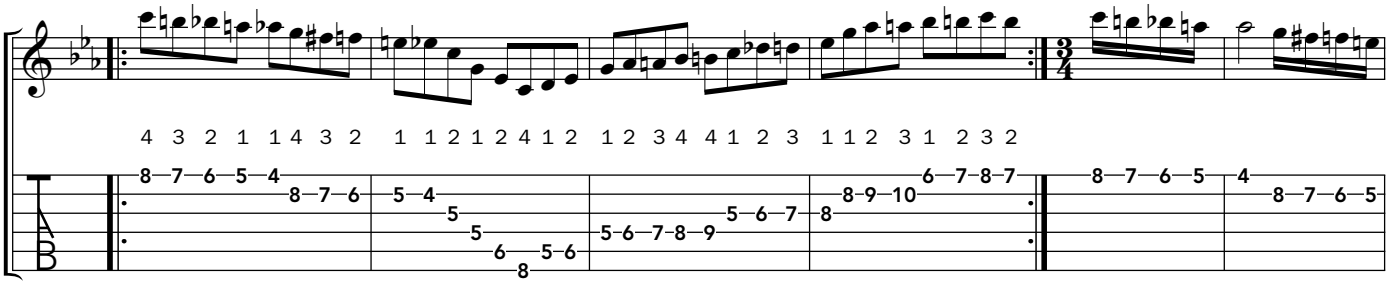
Ex. 9



WEEK 3

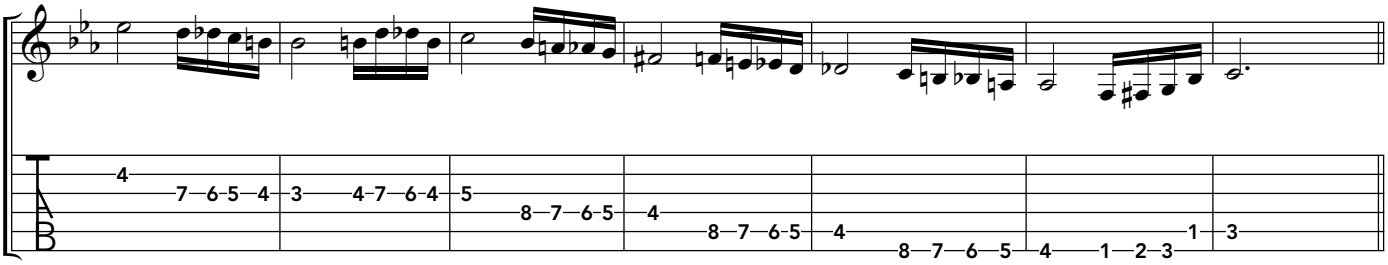
Ex. 10

Cm



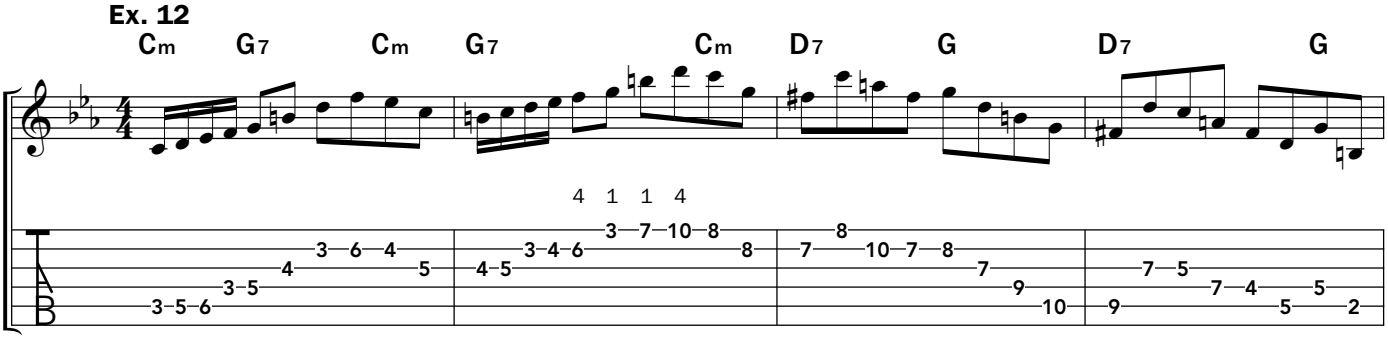
Ex. 11

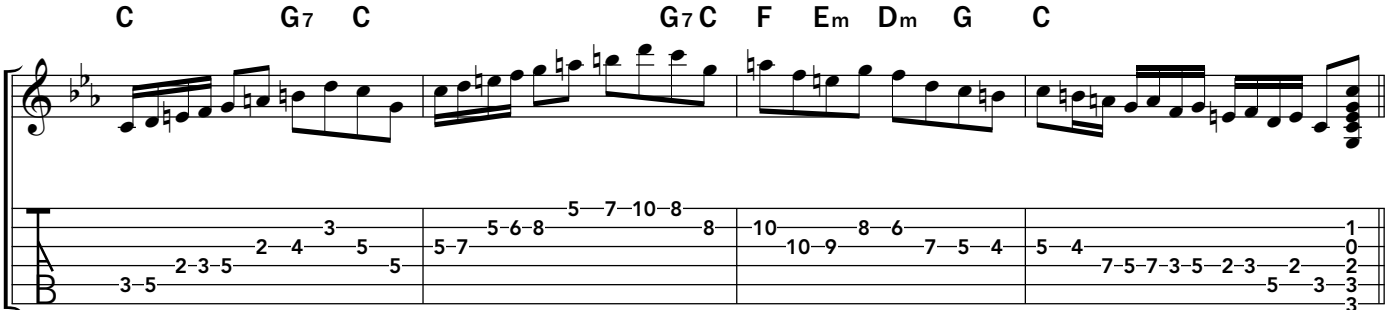
Cm



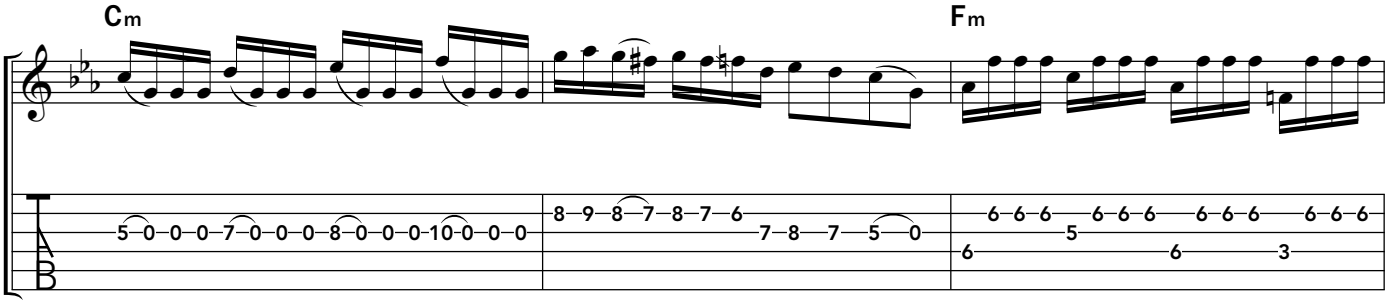
WEEK 4

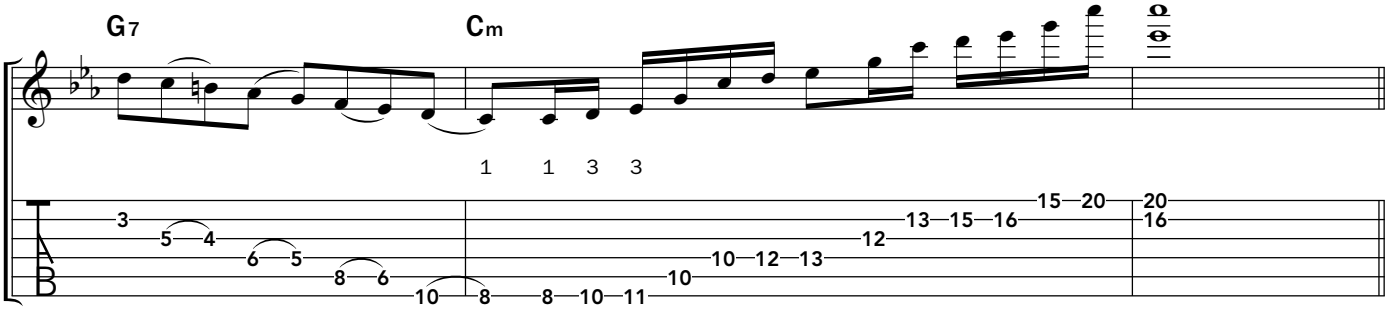
Ex. 12





Ex. 13





Dolly Dishes a Warning

The 1974 country classic 'Jolene' is driven by a satisfying acoustic-guitar part

BY ADAM PERLMUTTER



Dolly Parton

Dolly Parton's most widely covered song, "Jolene" was released in 1973 and continues to resonate with its timeless theme of romantic insecurity.

It's been covered by everyone from Olivia Newton-John to Reba McEntire, Laura Marling (with Mumford & Sons) to the White Stripes. *Rolling Stone* ranks the song No. 217 on its list of 500 Greatest Songs of All Time. The haunting lyrics trace the feelings of a jealous woman challenging a rival who is chasing after her husband.

"Jolene" was originally recorded with a capo at the fourth fret, presumably to accommodate Parton's vocal range. The chords are fingered in the key of A minor, but sound a major third higher, in the key of C♯ minor. Whether you learn the song with or without the capo—and no matter what tempo you use—it's an easy but satisfying piece to put together.

Rolling Stone ranks the song No. 217 on its list of 500 Greatest Songs of All Time.

Start with the two-bar intro pattern, shown here in notation, in which a basic open A-minor chord (C♯ minor, if you're using the fourth-fret capo) is embellished with slurs. This part—and the rest of the song—is best played fingerstyle: Pick the notes on the lower strings with your thumb and those on the higher strings with your index and middle fingers.

And aim for smoothness when playing the double-stop hammer-on in the first bar and the pull-off in the second measure.

If you take the time to learn the intro slowly, so that the groove feels second nature, then everything else should fall into place. The chorus/verse progression arranged here after the intro runs throughout the song. Note that one of the measures is omitted during each verse.

Also, if you'd like a little more variety, in bar 3 of the verse, substitute a G/B chord for G. AG

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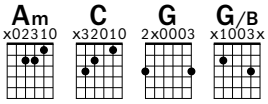


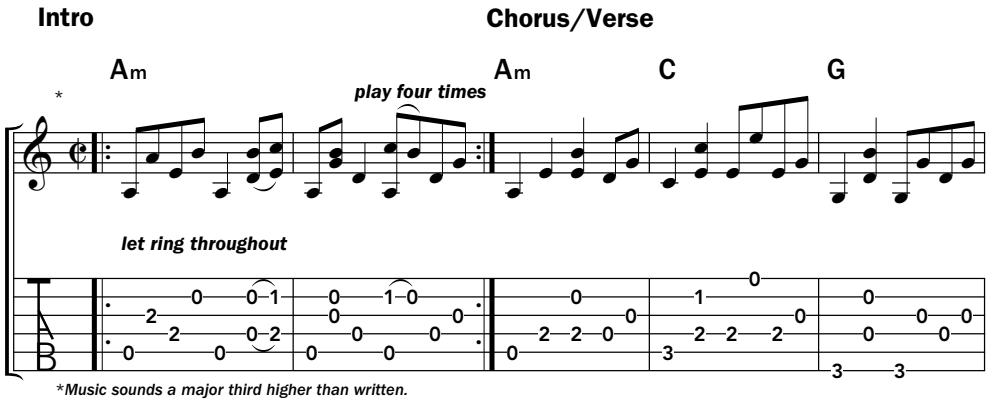


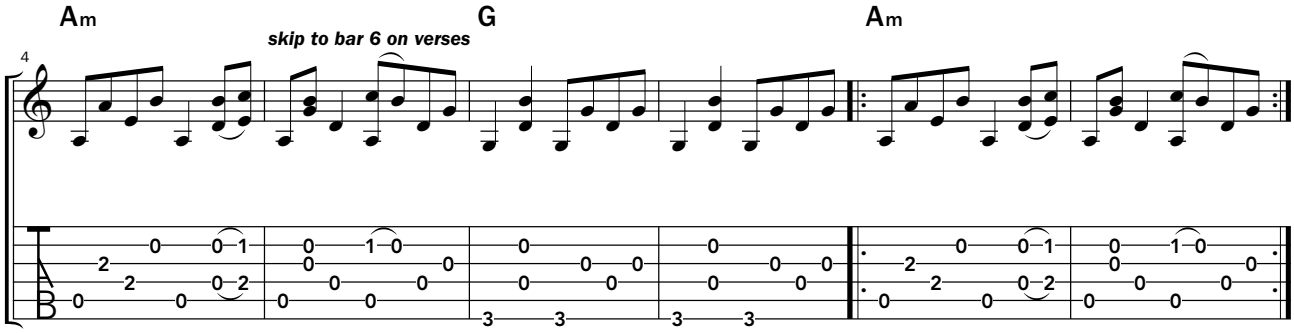
JOLENE

WORDS AND MUSIC BY DOLLY PARTON

Chords, Capo IV







Intro

Am

Chorus

Am C G Am
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene

G Am
I'm begging of you please don't take my man

C G Am
Jolene, Jolene, Jolene, Jolene

G Am
Please don't take him just because you can

Am C
1. Your beauty is beyond compare

G/B Am
With flaming locks of auburn hair

G Am
With ivory skin and eyes of emerald green

C
Your smile is like a breath of spring

G/B Am
Your voice is soft like summer rain

G Am
And I cannot compete with you, Jolene

2. He talks about you in his sleep
And there's nothing I can do to keep
From crying when he calls your name, Jolene
And I can easily understand
How you could easily take my man
But you don't know what he means to me, Jolene

Repeat Chorus

3. You could have your choice of men
But I could never love again
He's the only one for me, Jolene
I had to have this talk with you
My happiness depends on you
And whatever you decide to do, Jolene

Repeat Chorus

Outro

Am

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WATCH STEVE BAUGHMAN PLAY 'DANNY BOY'
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A Haunting Melody

This Orkney-tuned 'Danny Boy' is quintessentially Irish, despite its English roots

BY STEVE BAUGHMAN

The English lawyer Frederic Weatherly wrote the words to "Danny Boy" in 1910. The lyrics were later joined to this much older, mournful melody, then widely known as "Londonderry Air," or in school-kid humor, "London Derriere." Despite its non-Irish origins, the tune has become the signature song of the Irish diaspora—it is often performed at funerals and was played to represent Northern Ireland at the start of the 2012 Olympic Games.

This haunting melody flows from strings in Orkney tuning (C G D G C D). In this arrangement, the melody is played entirely on the three treble strings. It starts off with a typical Orkneyism, a simple melodic (non-linear or "harp style") sequence in which each melody note is played on a different string than the prior one. It is just three notes here ("Oh-Dan-ny"), but you immediately hear the textural difference between melodic and linear playing.

When I recorded this piece, I tried to let the melody notes live as long as they possibly could. This requires a good bit of precision on the left hand—don't let your fingers slop over and prematurely end the life of a nearby ringing melody note.

The same goes for the bass part, although you may want to staccato up a few notes here and there when it serves the music. It is a fairly busy part with slight hints of jazz. I try to maintain a flowing arpeggiated feel on the lower strings.

The left hand does a bit of hard work in this arrangement as well, like the bass run in the 28th measure. But nothing too scary.

I encourage you to focus first on getting the melody down. Once you have that in your blood, you may feel free to explore your own bass lines and arpeggios.

One final note: Almost all the tunes recorded in Orkney play out of the key of G (or the G position if a capo is used.) In playing this arrangement, you will join the exclusive club of Orkney pickers playing in C.

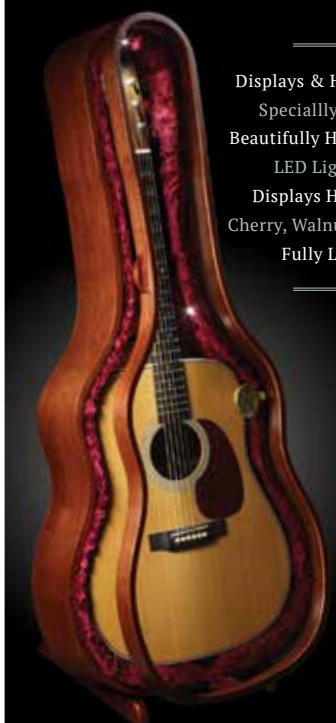
Happy St. Patrick's Day!

Steve Baughman is a San Francisco-based fingerstyle guitarist and banjo player. This Orkney arrangement of "Danny Boy" appears on his album Alone and Together, *with guitarist Robin Bullock.*

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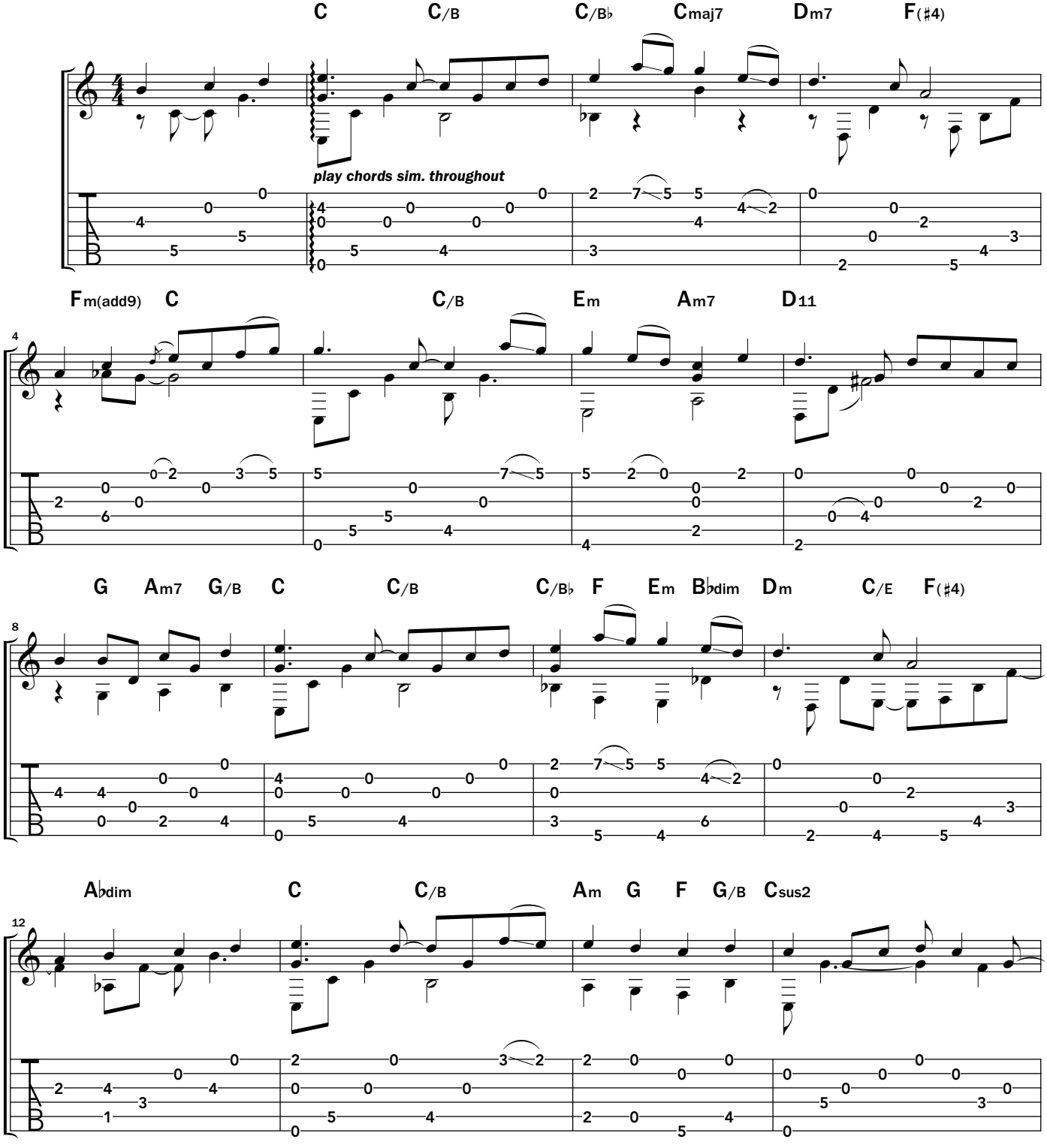
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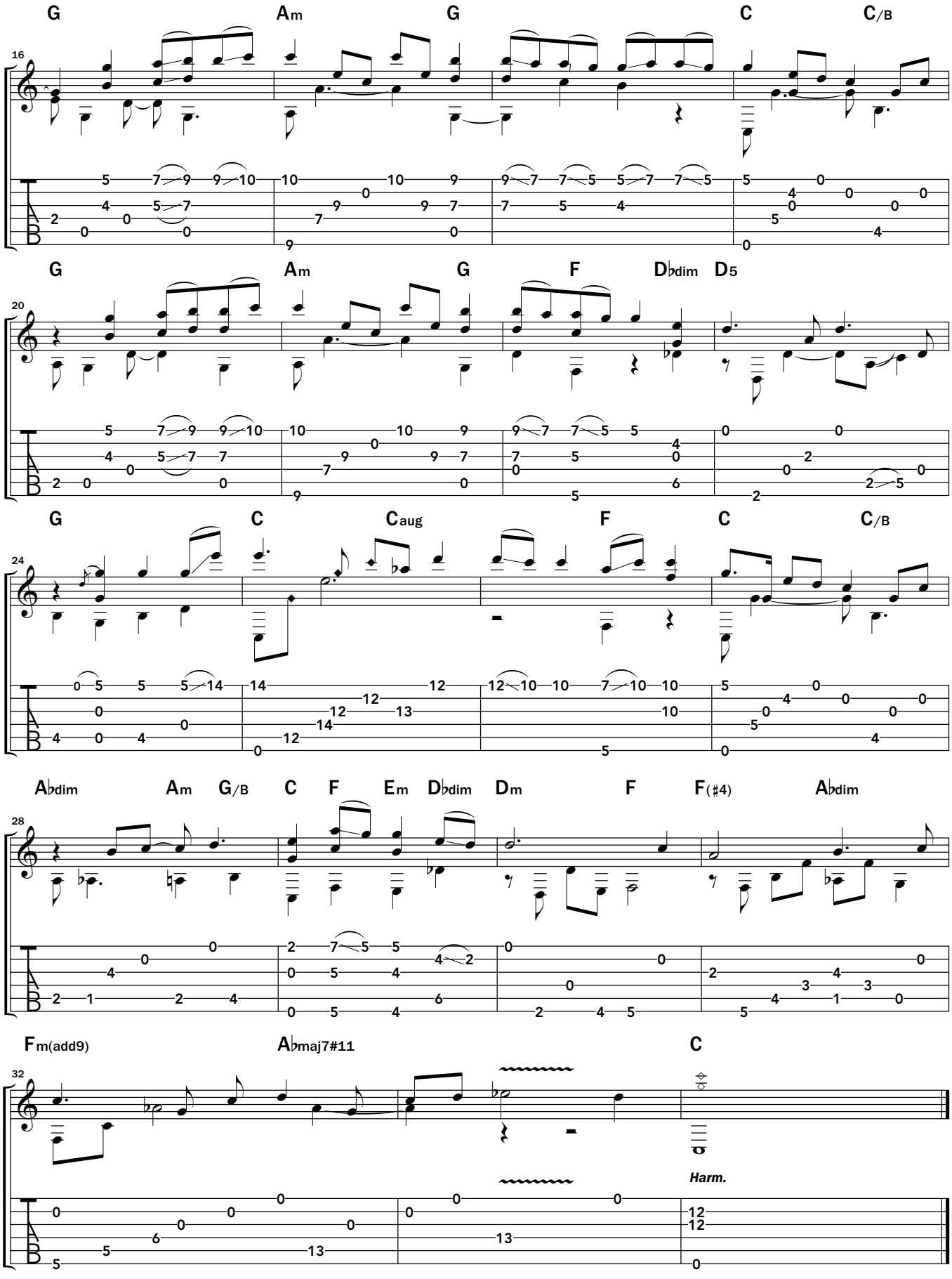
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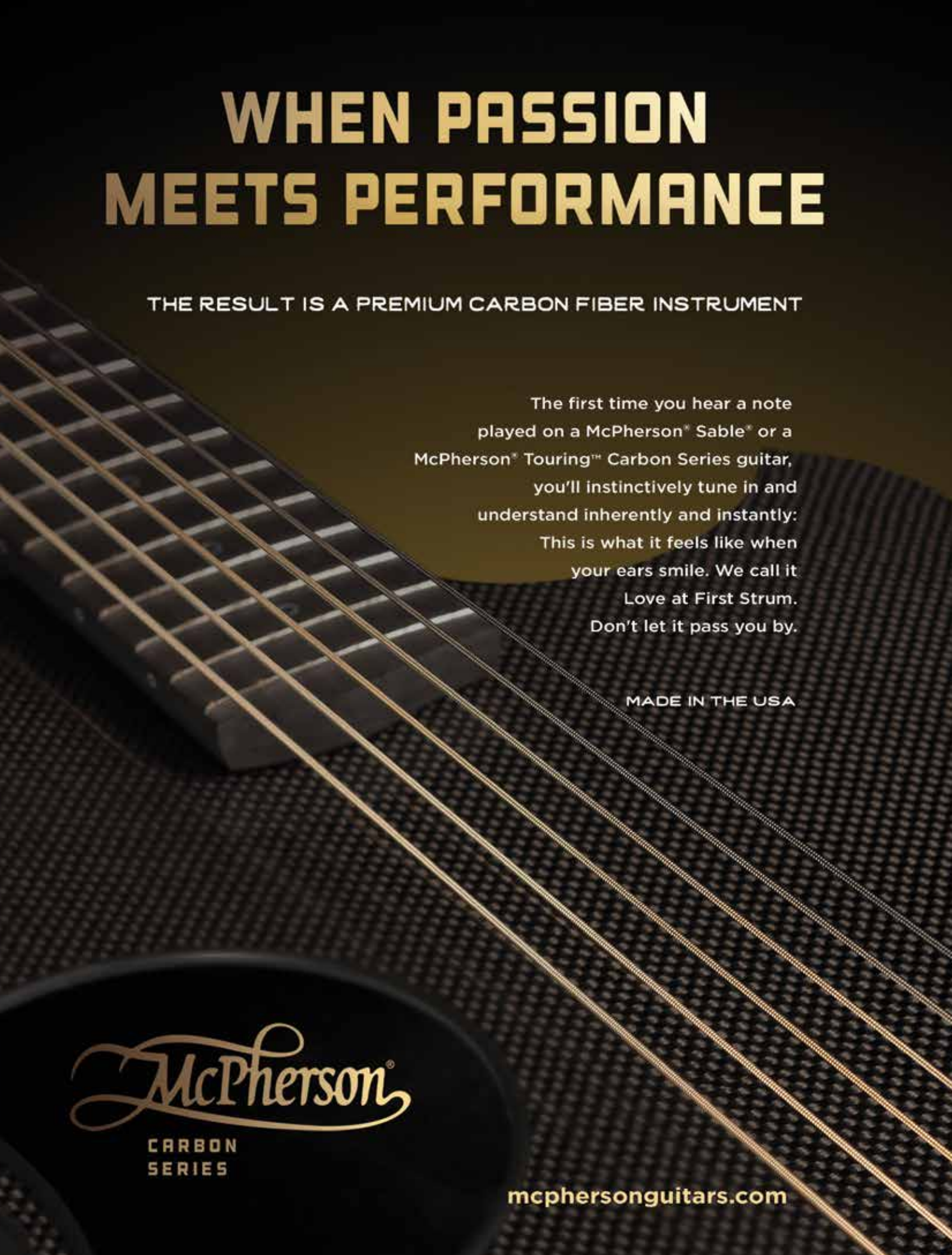


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Cont. from p. 61




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Jack Williams

A Loving Tribute

The Southern singer-songwriter Jack Williams tips his hat to Josh White

BY ADAM PERLMUTTER

The late Josh White transcended social and racial barriers in his work as a singer-songwriter, civil-rights activist, and actor. Well versed in Piedmont-style fingerpicking, he was no slouch on the acoustic guitar (see Adam Levy's Josh White lesson feature on p. 16.)

The man and his music are the inspiration behind troubadour Jack Williams' soulful song "A Natural Man"—not to be confused with Lou Rawls' tune of the same name, or Josh White's "Like a Natural Man." Throughout his recorded version, from his album *Walkin' Dreams*, Williams accompanies himself with deftly improvised patterns and interludes.

The song is in the key of D major. It's arranged here in drop-D tuning (like standard, but with the sixth string lowered to D), giving the I chord (D) an impressive bottom end. The intro is representative of the sorts of patterns Williams adds throughout the song. This part pits an alternating bass line against a melody that includes bends. It isn't easy. (You can watch Williams play the song at AcousticGuitar.com/Sessions.)

If you're up for tackling it, learn the intro one bar at a time, making sure you're playing things cleanly and rhythmically along the way. Then, using the intro as a blueprint, whip up some of your own variations—either pre-composed or improvised. If all that fancy fretwork isn't really your thing, stick with a simple accompaniment pattern, also shown in notation, with bass notes on beats 1 and 3 and chords on 2 and 4. You might try palm-muting the bass notes. (Lightly rest your palm on the strings as you pick the notes, muffling them slightly.) This will channel the sound of the string bass heard on Williams' recording, making for a nice textural contrast with the chords. Learn the rhythm first on the D chord, and then extend it to the other chords before filing it away in your rhythmic toolkit. AG

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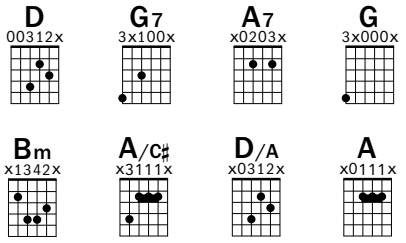
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A NATURAL MAN

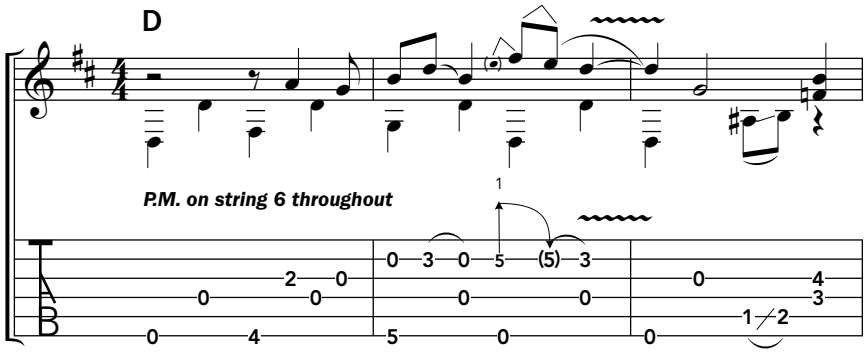
BY JACK WILLIAMS

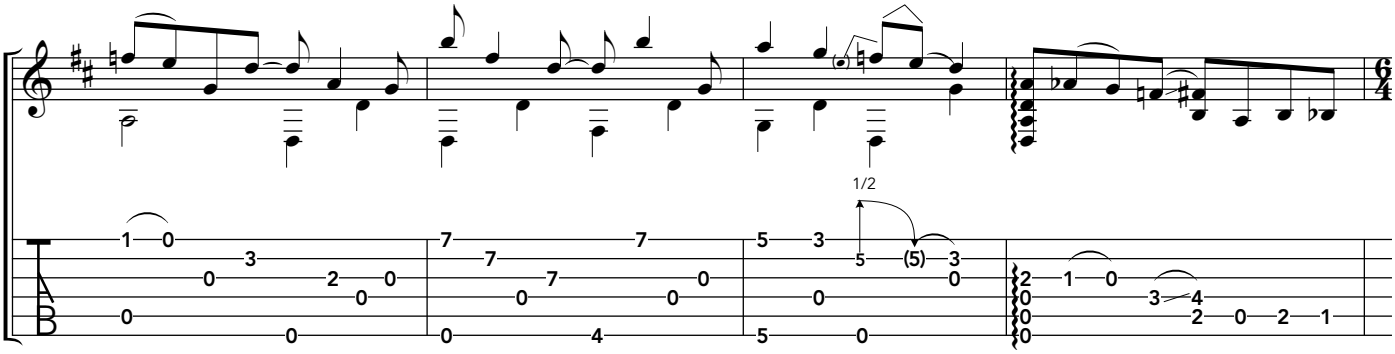
Tuning: D A D G B E

Chords

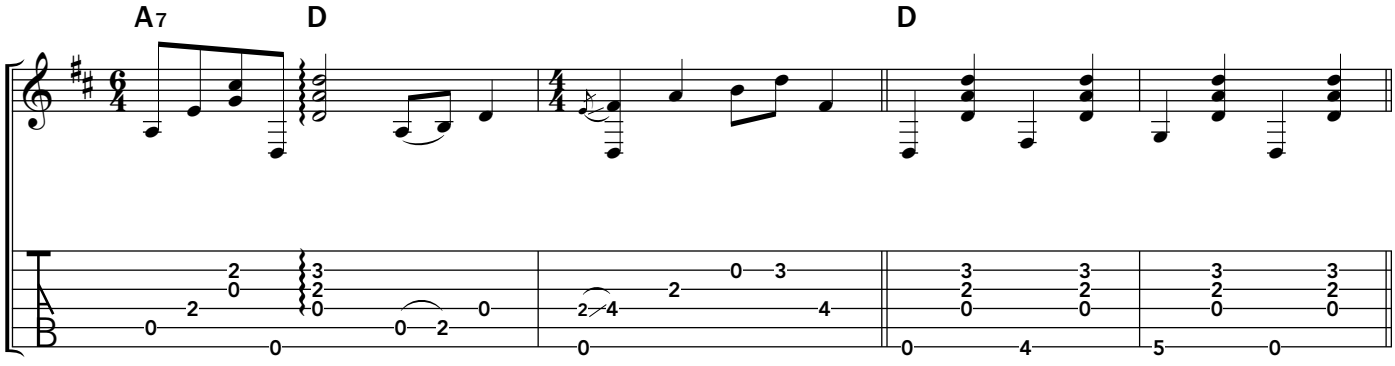


Intro





Accompaniment Pattern



D

1. Oh, Josh White was a natural man

 Held a plug nickel in the palm of his hand

 He raised it up like a glass to his eye

 What he saw through the nickel made the natural man cry

G7

Lord, lord, lord, this mornin'

A7 **D**

Made a natural man cry

2. Then through the nickel a vision arose
 He saw an actor in the jungle with a bone in his nose
 He saw a maid in an apron with a Hollywood grin
 He heard a singer at the back door slammin' again
 Lord, lord, lord
 He heard the back door slammin' again

Cont. on p. 66

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Cont. from p. 65

Chorus

G **Bm**
High up on a mountain

G **D**
Sat the Lord and the natural man

A/C♯ **Bm** **Dm/A**
Oh, Josh White got the gift of song

G **A** **D**
But he never saw the promised land

He never saw the promised land

Interlude

D

3. Oh, Josh White laid the nickel down
He put his hands in his pockets, strolled into town
He looked to the left and over to the right
But he couldn't find a place to spend his money that night
Lord, lord, lord
He sure want to spend some money tonight

4. Well he ran to the hotel, dollar in hand
But they wouldn't take a dollar from no colored man
He said it's getting mighty late, mister, where can I go
He said play me a tune, I'll let you sleep on the floor
Lord, lord, lord
Josh White lyin' asleep on the floor

Repeat Chorus

Interlude

D

5. Way up yonder where the angels are found
All that blood from his fingers stained the heavenly ground
There ain't nothin' to do but to do what you do
And do it till they roll a stone over you
Lord, lord, lord
Don't let 'em roll a stone over you

Repeat Chorus x2

Outro/Instrumental

D

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Ask the Expert
Cold weather—the busker's nemesis

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New Gear
The refined tone of the Boswell 00-14

74
New Gear
The affordable Fender T-Bucket 400

75
New Gear
Skysonic's impressive Pro-1 pickup system

AG TRADE



COURTESY OF GUITARRAS ZEPEDA

A Life of Passion

Three generations of guitar-making signify Guitarras Zepeda

BY GARY PARKS

After standing for over half an hour in the crowded bus from Granada, I arrive in Masaya's sprawling outdoor market in search of Nicaragua's premier guitar maker. Inquiries lead to a taxi driver who knows the location, and soon my wife, Eva Bagno, and I are welcomed through the gate of a rustic, tin-roofed workshop with the family home further back in the courtyard. What follows is several hours of enjoyable conversation, watching instruments being built and playing a variety of handmade classical and steel-string guitars.

"I start my days around 5 A.M. by checking out the workshop and offering prayers for those who came before me," luthier Sergio Zepeda says.

He is the principal luthier at Guitarras Zepeda, founded in 1934 by his grandfather Jose Santos Zepeda, who built guitars for more than 50 years after learning the trade from a maker in El Salvador. As a child, Sergio recalls playing with "gold medals and trophies" awarded for his grandfather's instruments.

Sergio's father and uncle apprenticed with Jose Santos in those early days, when the shop was located in the Nicaraguan capital city of Managua. "I began working in the family workshop when I was six years old, learning how to build instruments from my father," he recalls. "My motivation was to see how the pieces went together, and how the hand tools and machines were used. I built my first complete guitar when I was 13."

The shop moved to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, and then back to Managua. "We went where my father decided to live," he says. "Natural disasters destroyed two of our homes and workshops, so we would leave and rebuild. The trophies were all lost in the 1972 Managua earthquake," which left 6,000 dead and 250,000 homeless.

After the quake, the family's instrument building ceased for a decade and his father sold what could be salvaged.

During their time in Managua, young Sergio Zepeda began making his living by singing with various bands. When not playing music, he was often at the shop, assisting his father and uncle. After its closure, Sergio's love of crafting wood into music persisted, and he eventually decided to start again, opening the workshop in Masaya in 1983. His uncle Silvio (who is still part of the production team) provided a direct link to his grandfather's techniques and designs. Together, they built jigs, clamps, and tools to expand upon those traditions.

Sergio's stint as a performer informs the instruments he builds, helping him meet the needs of his customers. "As a luthier, my time as a musician lets me understand the experience of being onstage, and what sounds from the instruments are appropriate. It has been my passion—literally my life."

"High-quality materials and workmanship

have been the most important factors that my grandfather taught to us, and we keep to the tradition," Sergio says. "Our wood comes from Nicaragua, Africa, Canada, India, and other countries. We usually cut and cure our own boards, storing them in a special room, where we regularly check the humidity level."

In the shop, Sergio and his co-workers use "third-generation jigs and clamps based on family designs. I also have jigs from other famous builders for the guitar body, in case the customer asks for it."

For classical guitars, Guitarras Zepeda "follows the Spanish style" with fan-braced tops, slotted pegheads, soundhole rosettes, and the classical body shape. However, some of the nylon-stringed instruments offer cutaways.

He began building steel-string guitars in 1990, encouraged by a North American customer. These instruments are usually dreadnought or OM sized, with X-braced tops and a standard internal bridge plate and rosewood bridge with pins. Bracing is heavier to accommodate the greater string tension. As Sergio says about these instruments, "the wood is the same, but the inside has a very different structure."

All the instruments are inspired by his grandfather's work. "We use the same techniques, but not the same models," he says. "Each generation has made changes, combining tradition with unique features."

Wood dimensions depend on the particular instrument, "but in general, the top thickness is 2.5 mm, with the sides at 2 mm and back at 2.8 mm."

Besides providing standard-instrument models, Guitarras Zepeda will custom-build an instrument. I was shown notes and sketches for a custom steel-string acoustic. "We ask them for specific details, and then check whether the instruments already exist and determine whether it is possible to build," he says. "We avoid experiments in which the customer doesn't have any idea of the results of what is being asked for, where key parts and structures are greatly altered."

"Most musicians have a special style of playing and want to be unique, and we use all of our experience to provide a high-quality instrument according to their needs."

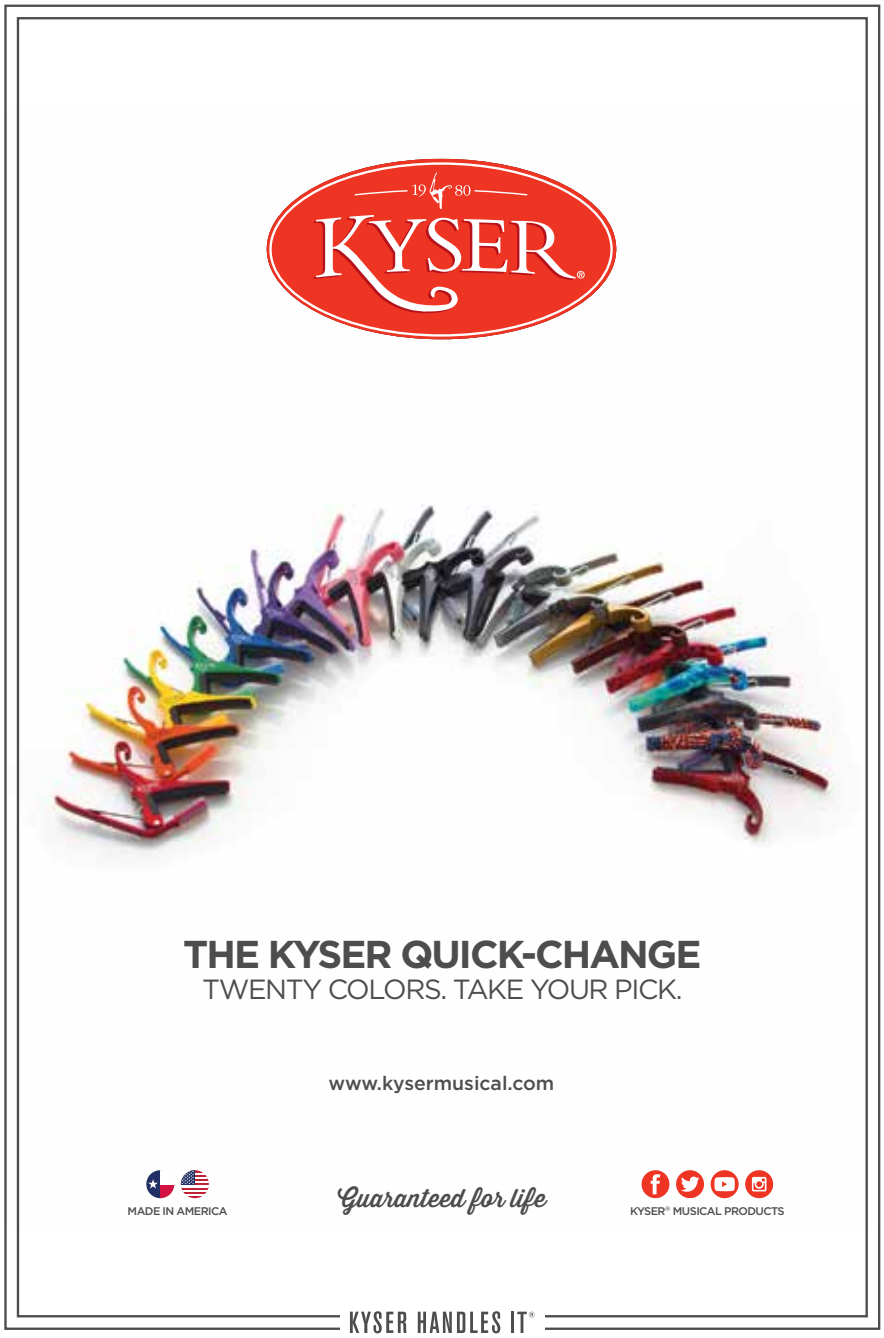
The shop builds approximately 375 instruments each year, including a couple dozen Master and Grandmaster guitars, plus ukuleles, mandolins, and guitarrillas. Sergio says that "our high-end instruments are for players who are performing or who want the best quality and sound. The difference between levels includes the types of woods [spruce or red-cedar tops, cocobolo rosewood back and sides, ebony fingerboard], hardware, details, and finishing."

Despite his decades of building instruments in the family business, Sergio Zepeda remains open to new ideas. He continues to "compare designs with other builders, improve upon them, and create my own new models. We try to innovate, improving the features of our instruments."

For the future, he says, "my vision is to keep building excellent instruments and to reach more international customers. If we have the opportunity to distribute internationally, we will do it. Locally, we will remain with the same system of selling directly to customers."

Zepeda, his uncle, and three others are directly involved in building instruments, while others handle marketing, sales, and customer service. His daughter, Mirna, studies industrial engineering, and helps with the business in a variety of ways while his "little son" is awaiting his turn.

"My hope is that one of my children will carry on the family tradition after me," he says. AG





A Busker's Aid

Extreme weather in outdoor conditions can lead to wear and tear on acoustic guitars. What's a street musician to do?

BY MAMIE MINCH

Q: *I'm a street musician by trade and subject my guitars to long hours of extreme weather by necessity. What can I do to help my poor guitars as they suffer the conditions I put them through? I worry most about the four- to six-hour sets I play in 25-degree weather and the rainy days. I've learned some things: If you're going to play in the rain, it's better to have a guitar with a nitro finish—with poly, the water gets under the finish at the edges of the bridge and at the fingerboard extension and the finish will separate from the wood. I've tried playing cheaper guitars, but I need a certain minimum in sound, playability, and feel in order to do my best. I would like to keep my guitars from making constant visits to the repair shop though. Can you offer any advice on how best to keep them healthy?*

—Danny Gone

A: A: Thanks for writing in. I live in New York City, and I love our street-music scene—it's a lovely, unexpected way to get a little magic on my subway commute or add some romantic swirl to a walk around the neighborhood. It brings strangers together in a shared experience, and makes live music accessible to people, which is important. One thing's for certain—you're part of a hard-working bunch. Not only is it challenging to entertain people who may need a little convincing to stop and listen, but I'm sure it's physically challenging as well. No union breaks for you!

So, as a player who works outdoors, you'll have more specific needs and higher demands for your guitars than most people. Clearly, these extremes in weather and humidity are not ideal for a guitar, but life hardly is. Sounds like you've figured out some things about moisture the hard way. You ask how to keep using your current guitars and minimize damage, and there are some things I could recommend, but remember: Using a guitar in this way will shorten its life expectancy. Wooden instruments are just not designed to go from room temperature to below freezing every day, and getting wet—at all—is even worse. That said, you could let your guitar slowly acclimate by keeping the case closed in the newer temperature for awhile; you could keep two saddles of different heights handy in case those humid days change your action drastically; and definitely make friends with your repair person—you'll need a lot of regluing! Oh, and it sounds like you may need a bigger umbrella.

Using a guitar in this way will shorten its life expectancy. Wooden instruments are just not designed to go from room temperature to below freezing every day, and getting wet–at all–is even worse.

That said, here's what I *really* want you to do: Get the right tool for the job. After all, that's what guitars are, and not just for the gigging musician—even folks who enjoy a little picking or songwriting at their leisure should think about their guitar as just another tool in the pursuit of music making. You'll find your work much easier—and yourself much happier—if you get the right tool for the task at hand. I think a composite guitar is right for you. I've been happily surprised at the quality of sound of some of these guitars, and lots of the major brands—including Martin and the appropriately named RainSong—offer models with at least composite necks, backs, and sides. They are sturdily built and will do a much better job of staying consistent in cold and wet weather—composite materials, like carbon fiber, generally don't shrink and expand with changes in temperature and humidity. Also, a lot of these materials have the benefit of a high stiffness-to-weight ratio, so they can sound good, and you won't be lugging around a clunker. There are decent ones available at a variety of price points, too.

I always recommend a good professional setup when you buy a factory instrument, so build that into your budget, but the money you'll save on repair will tip the scales enough to make it worth it.

Those are dollars that can stay in your hat!

Mamie Minch is the co-owner of Brooklyn Lutherie. She is the former head of repair at Retrofret Guitars and an active blues player.



Mamie Minch

GOT A QUESTION?

Uncertain about guitar care and maintenance? The ins-and-outs of guitar building? Or a topic related to your gear?

Ask *Acoustic Guitar's* resident repair expert Mamie Minch. Send an email titled "Repair Expert" to editor Greg Cahill at greg.cahill@stringletter.com, and he'll forward it to Mamie.

If *AG* selects your question for publication, you'll receive a complimentary copy of *AG's The Acoustic Guitar Owner's Manual.*

The Golden Era Is Now

The hand-built Boswell 00-14 is all about refined tone and articulation

BY PETE MADSEN

Butch Boswell, a self-proclaimed "wood junkie," is taking his 20 years of guitar repair skills and putting them toward building one-of-a-kind instruments that cater to his clients' individual needs. Boswell builds guitars in small batches of two or three instruments at a time at his shop in Bend, Oregon. In a former life, Boswell worked at Taylor guitars, doing repairs and assembly. He later helped run the repair shop at Rudy's Music Stop in New York City. His auditory templates for the instruments are the Martin guitars of the 1930s and '40s. As Boswell puts it, the builders of this golden era of guitar making were only concerned about one thing: "Making the best sounding guitars they possibly could."

In those days, the quality of the wood was important—and quality tonewoods were much more abundant back then—and Boswell has taken it upon himself to find the best sources for old-growth wood, including those species protected under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES).

The Boswell 00-14 has a small body with a 14-fret neck junction and a scale length of 24.9 inches. With a 1 23/32-inch nut and 2 1/4 inch string spacing at the saddle, the guitar is comfortable for fingerpickers. The compact body makes it ideal for light strumming as well. The 00-14's appearance is simple and understated, yet elegant: The Italian spruce top's grain is so fine it's almost invisible and the koa back and sides have a honeyed mahogany look. Boswell indicates this is old wood and very stable. The touch of Brazilian rosewood used for the peg head overlay, rosette, and binding adds to the elegant styling. The 00-14 also features open-geared Waverly tuners, a light finish on the neck and forward-shifted X bracing.



THE ROAD TEST

A soft strum with the pick brings out a beautiful shimmer. I played the Beatles "You've Got to Hide Your Love Away" with a







PHOTOS BY MATTHEW STURDEVANT

light touch and got a good, mid-voiced, balanced tone. Also I tried a bit of Pink Floyd's "Wish You Were Here" and decided I really didn't need to strike the strings hard to get a rich and articulate sound. A forceful attack might give you more volume, but the Boswell is about refined tone and articulation.

However, playing single-note blues solo lines with a slightly aggressive attack, I was impressed with the cutting sound on the high strings. The 00-14 has a great-feeling neck, with its matte finish, and is easy to navigate from nut to the neck junction. The neck profile is a more modern C shape and should be comfortable for different-sized hands and playing styles.

The combination of light-gauge strings and a shorter scale also make it easy to bend strings and keep the "fight" to a minimum. Progressing through a run down to the low strings, I altered my attack, using a lighter touch, to get the most out of the punchy midrange of the fifth and sixth strings.

The bass sound on the Boswell is so rich and clear that you really want to hang out there and not palm mute too much.

I really appreciated the Boswell's bass sound—sparkling and nowhere near boomy—when I fingerpicked a swampy blues original. It was so rich and clear that I found myself avoiding palm muting, so that I could enjoy the bass notes in their full glory.

I played the traditional country-blues piece "Poor Boy Long Way from Home" in open-D tuning and heard what I thought was a rattle inside the guitar, but then realized that the soundboard was vibrating so excitedly it was causing a button on my shirtsleeve to buzz: confirmation that the Boswell does not need an aggressive attack to get the top vibrating.

All in all, the Boswell is a great choice for someone looking for a responsive guitar, and who has a light and refined touch.

The simple design of this 00-14 is elegant, not flashy, and if you're willing to shell out a little cash, you will come away rewarded with lush tone and an impeccable playing instrument. AG

AT A GLANCE

BOSWELL 00-14

BODY

SIZE 14-fret 00

TOP Italian spruce

BACK & SIDES Hawaiian koa

BACK BRACING Traditional ladder, German spruce

TOP BRACING Forward-shifted X, straight taper, German spruce

BINDING Brazilian

SADDLE 2 1/4 inches, compensated/intonated fossil ivory

END GRAFT Brazilian with single line red maple edge purfling,

PEGHEAD OVERLAY Brazilian with "Boswell" aged pearl inlay,

ROSETTE Brazilian, red maple purfling trim interior/exterior,

UPPER BOUT WIDTH 10 7/8 inches

WAIST WIDTH 8 3/4 inches

DEPTH AT END BLOCK 4 1/4 inches

NECK

NUT 1 23/32 inches, fossil ivory

BRIDGE PINS Ebony/pearl

BRIDGE Madagascar

FINGERBOARD Madagascar RW, 20 frets

FRETS Gold EVO wire

12TH-FRET WIDTH 2 3/16 inches

PRICE

$5,000

Hand built in Bend, Oregon

boswellguitars.com

A Legend Gets a Makeover

The stalwart Taylor 410ce-R is the latest iteration on a classic dreadnought

BY PETE MADSEN

For Bob Taylor, the blending of tradition and modern appointments and innovations on his guitars is second nature. Take the 410ce-R, for example. Nothing is more traditional than a dreadnought-sized guitar, but add a slim neck profile, an elegant Venetian cutaway, and an innovative pickup system that accurately represents the true acoustic nature of the guitar in an amplified setting, and you have a modern acoustic guitar that speaks to a wide spectrum of players.

Taylor's 410 model holds iconic status in the company's history, as detailed in former *AG* gear editor Teja Gerken's authoritative 2015 study *The Taylor Guitar Book: 40 Years of Great American Flattops* (Hal Leonard). Introduced in 1991, the 410 became the first US-built production dreadnought sold for under $1,000. The original model had mahogany back and sides. In 1998, the company replaced the mahogany with ovangkol, a dense African relative of rosewood. Recently, Taylor began offering an Indian rosewood option, hence the "R" in 410ce-R (the "c" stands for cutaway and the "e" electronics).

According to Taylor, ovangkol shares many of the same properties as rosewood, but with a fuller mid range and some tonal similarities to koa. The color of ovangkol is more like koa, sort of a bronze-gold. There is no mistaking rosewood, however. Some rosewoods are reddish, but the 410ce-R model *AG* tested has a dark coffee-bean color, reminiscent of Brazilian rosewood guitars. Combined with a light-grain, solid Sitka spruce top, white plastic binding, gloss finish on the top, back , and sides, and a faux tortoise-shell pick guard, this unadorned, yet elegant, dreadnought is simple yet visually striking.



A DIVERSE PLAYER

Just as the color can vary, so can the sound. Indian rosewood guitars often have a dark bass sound with more of a low-end growl. However, the 410ce-R has a brassy sound—this rosewood has a much sharper, brighter snap to it, with a bass response that is more heard than



For fingerpickers who have been playing smaller-bodied guitars to get a more defined sound, but who miss the dynamic range of a bigger guitar, this could be an attractive option.

felt. Strummers and bluegrass players will appreciate this dreadnought-sized guitar, but I find the 410ce-R to be a wonderful fingerpicker as well. The not-so-boomy bass gives excellent definition to alternating and monotonic bass lines. I love the depth of sound when I played slide (E B E G ♯ B E) in open-E tuning, especially when I barred the strings with my slide, then slowly opened up the bass strings with alternate bass playing. For fingerpickers who have been playing small-bodied guitars in order to get a more defined sound, but who miss the dynamic range of a bigger guitar, this could be an attractive option.

When strummed, the 410ce-R cuts through the sound in an ensemble setting. The high-end sparkle matches well with other acoustic instruments, especially in an electrified situation. And the neck's slim profile makes it easy to navigate from the nut to the 19th fret—accessible because of the aforementioned Venetian cutaway. If you like to play fast runs up and down the neck, you'll enjoy picking your way through the 410ce-R.

The narrow 1 $^{11}/_{16}$-inch nut sets up the tropical mahogany neck to be slimmer and easier to navigate than many comparable dreads. The neck's 25.5-inch scale might seem a little daunting to those used to a shorter scale, but Taylor has done an excellent job of making the neck easy to play with low action.

TRADITIONAL DESIGN & MODERN APPOINTMENTS

Taylor is known for its dedication to workmanship and the 410ce-R is no exception. The setup and craftsmanship are impeccable. Frets are dressed and smooth and a peek inside the guitar shows no glue stains, no overspray, or other imperfections.

I plug the 410ce-R into a Fishman Loubox Mini and am greeted with a remarkable transparency in the sound. The Expression System 2's onboard volume, treble, and bass controls are mounted unobtrusively on the upper side bout close to the neck, which makes on-the-fly adjustments quick and easy. I can hardly remember plugging in an acoustic guitar and getting such an accurate amplified representation of the acoustic sound, a testament to Taylor's innovative pickup design. The Expression System 2 places the sensors behind the saddle rather than underneath, like most piezo designs. The three sensors mounted behind the saddle capture one of the most accurate representations of the natural acoustic sounds I've heard in an electrified acoustic instrument. All the elements of the character of the wood are present in the electrified format. The bass sounds brassy and rich, and the trebles sparkle without becoming harsh or "quacky," as is the case with many piezo pickups.

In the 410ce-R, Taylor has married traditional guitar design with modern appointments that speak to the need of today's acoustic



players. No longer can guitar makers ignore the need to create onboard electronics that accurately represent the guitar's acoustic sound. The 410ce-R has a big, powerful voice and a neck that's easy to navigate, creating the right details for long hours of playing enjoyment. Whether you're a professional gigging musician or a hobbyist, the 410ce-R is an instrument you'll be proud to bring to the next gig, jam, or stay-at-home practice session. AG

AT-A-GLANCE

TAYLOR 410CE-R

BODY
SIZE Dreadnought with Venetian cutaway

TOP Solid Sitka spruce

BACK & SIDES Indian rosewood

BINDING White ABS

BRIDGE PINS Ebony

BRACING Forward-shifted

TOP FINISH Gloss

NUT & SADDLE
Tusq nut/Micarta saddle

NECK
NUT WIDTH 1 $^{11}/_{16}$ inches

SCALE LENGTH 25 $^{1}/_{2}$ inches

NUMBER OF FRETS 20

FRETBOARD WOOD Ebony

TUNERS Taylor Nickel

EXTRAS
CASE Taylor deluxe hardshell case

STRINGS Elixir Phosphor Bronze HD Medium (.013-.056)

PRICE
$2,918 (MSRP), $2,199

Made in the USA

taylorguitars.com



The Latest Flame

There's a lot to love about the maple-top Fender T-Bucket 400CE

BY PETE MADSEN

Fender Guitars, long known for its iconic Strats and Teles, may turn a few heads with the flame-maple-topped, dreadnought-sized T-Bucket 400CE, which is not only good looking, but sounds good and, most importantly, is affordable.

The striking shimmer of the maple soundboard is complimented by laminated lacewood back and sides that have a pebble-grained appearance. The hot-rod-themed aesthetics are reflected in the rosette and fret markers, which feature "nuts" and "bolts" icons. The butterbean tuners are add vintage style.

At $399, you get a lot of bang for your buck from the T-Bucket.

THE TEST DRIVE

The T-Bucket has a thin C-shaped neck and slippery low action that should keep rockers happily flying around with speedy precision on the T-Bucket's stock light gauge strings (.012–.052). The thin neck (1.625 inches at the nut), which sports an attractive maple headstock, allows for easy thumb-over-the-neck Pete Townshend "Pinball Wizard"-styled chord grips.

I try some Django-inspired runs through "All of Me" and "Swing 42." The T-Bucket is hardly a Gypsy jazz guitar, but it does sound convincing in this setting—the slightly compressed sound and mid-range punch of the T-Bucket makes for a good rhythm guitar for the Gypsy style. Also, the cutaway lends itself to string excursions beyond the 14th fret, a boon for players of all styles.

The TB features a Fishman Isys III pickup system that is equipped with onboard volume, EQ controls (bass, middle, treble), and tuner. I plug the TB into a Fishman Loudbox Mini. Some onboard preamps have only one or two EQ controls, but I'm happy to have three to dial in the proper amount based on the style that I'm playing—for example, a little more bass for strumming or a little less mid for fingerpicking.

With its narrow nut, the TB feels a little cramped for fingerpicking ($2^1/_8$-inches of string spacing at the saddle), but if you have small hands, you may welcome the compact fit.

I bring the Fender to a gig and ask my second guitarist to play the TB through a separate amplifier (another Fishman Loudbox). Although she is mostly strumming and I'm fingerpicking, her sound is a little crisper and clearer.

I find myself envious of her sound.

The T-Bucket does not come equipped with a case or gig bag, so you'll need to factor in the extra expense, but at $399, you get a lot of bang for your buck. AG

AT A GLANCE
FENDER T-BUCKET 400CE

BODY

SHAPE Dreadnought cutaway with a 14-fret neck junction

TOP Laminated flamed maple

BACK & SIDES Laminated lacewood

BRACING Quartersawn scalloped "X"

NECK

MATERIAL Maple

NUT 1.625 inches

STRING LENGTH 25.3-inch scale

PROFILE "C" shape

FINGERBOARD Rosewood

HEADSTOCK Maple laminate

RADIUS 11.81-inch

NUT Graph Tech NuBone

STRINGS Fender Dura-Tone Coated 80/20 Bronze (.012–.052)

TUNERS Chrome die-cast

ELECTRONICS

Fishman Isys III system with active 3-band EQ and tuner

PRICE

$399

Made in Indonesia

fenderguitars.com

The Sky's the Limit

Skysonic's impressive Pro-1 pickup system offers flexibility and tonal variation

BY PETE MADSEN



Acoustic guitarists who wish to amplify their instruments have more choices than ever when it comes to aftermarket pickup systems. As companies such as Fishman, L.R. Baggs, K&K Sound, and Highlander continue to refine their systems, others, such as Skysonic, have entered the acoustic pickup world.

Founded in China, Skysonic has recently made its way stateside via the Allen Eden Guitar Co. Their top-of-the-line offering is the Pro-1, which combines a dual-coil magnetic soundhole pickup with an onboard mic and an under-saddle piezo pickup. Each element has its own volume control wheel, which allows you to blend as much of each source as you want. The three-element combination should provide many sonic possibilities based on a player's style. For example, a player who taps and uses soundboard percussion may want to dial in more of the piezo to amplify the body sounds; or someone who is playing with a group in various-sized rooms can dial in the right amount of each element to suit the acoustics of the situation.

Our review Pro-1 came mounted in a Ranch PG T-C-3 Grand Auditorium-sized guitar. I played the guitar through a Fishman Loudbox Mini amplifier. I started with 100 percent soundhole pickup, with no mic or piezo. The sound was crisp and clear, but weighted in volume towards the treble—you can adjust each of the six screw poles to compensate for this. However, rather than get out the Allen wrenches, I decided to dial in more of the mic and piezo to hear if I could achieve a better balance. Sure enough, boosting the mic provided more warmth to the treble strings. Adding in the piezo was a bit trickier. Turning it up to 100 percent was too bass-y and had my amp verging on feedback. My favorite sound was achieved by dialing in equal amounts of the magnetic pickup and mic and bringing in the piezo at about 30 percent of volume. This gave me the clarity combined with warmth I wanted.

My favorite sound was achieved by dialing in equal amounts of the magnetic pickup and mic and bringing in the piezo at about 30 percent of volume.

One concern I had was the volume-wheel adjustments. Two of the wheels are mounted on the magnetic pickup and I can imagine a heavy strummer, after adjusting the volume balance, hitting them unintentionally with the strumming hand and knocking the sound out of balance.

Also, you have to reach inside the guitar to adjust the piezo volume wheel, which would make on-the-fly changes difficult.

The Skysonic Pro-1 also features switches mounted on the underside of the magnetic pickup that allow you to go from mono to stereo, and a phase switch for more tonal variation.

I have used piezo and mic blend systems in my guitars for years and have always enjoyed the flexibility of being able to blend the sound based on the acoustics of the room. The Skysonic goes one step further and gives you a third element making the possibilities seem almost limitless. AG

AT-A-GLANCE

SKYSONIC PRO-1

FEATURES

Magnetic, dual-coil soundhole-mounted pickup with built-in active mic and piezo pickup

A phase switch allows for more tonal variation

Mono/stereo switch allows for stereo breakout to a mixer and separation of the soundhole and piezo pickups.

Easy or mountable installation

Up to 46 hours of battery life

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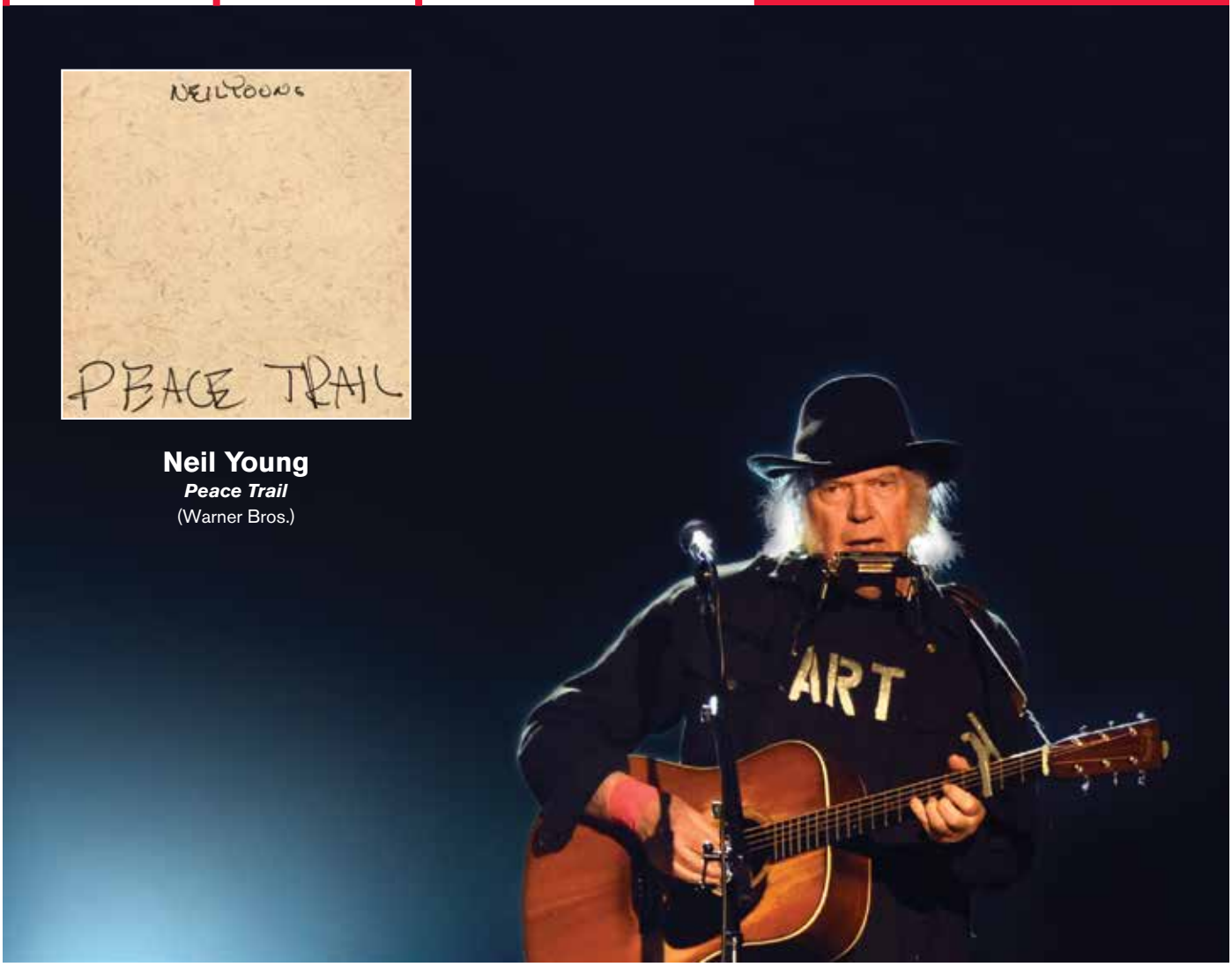
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The music-theory doctor is in



Neil Young
Peace Trail
(Warner Bros.)

The Unrepentant Folkie

Neil Young comes out with his metaphorical guns blazing on an album of mostly acoustic protest songs

BY GREG CAHILL

Talk about topical folk music. *Peace Trail* finds Neil Young blazing in a set of often musically understated protest songs. "Indian Givers," the debut single from this mostly acoustic CD, offered moral support earlier this winter to the protesters at the Standing Rock Sioux Reservation in South Dakota, where Native Americans, veterans, and other environmentalists gathered to fight construction of the Dakota Access oil pipeline in an effort to protect local river water. The single's release coincided with the highly publicized protests and cleverly recycles the same rhythm that Young used on 2005's "Prairie Wind."

For the most part, the album's lyrical themes reflect Young's recurring polemic on environmentalism, anti-consumerism, and social justice. A sense of urgency permeates *Peace Trail*, which features songs that Young wrote following the release of his 2016 album *EARTH*. It was recorded within a short time span at Rick Rubin's Shangri-la Studios. The album evokes intimate, sparse sonics that draw the listener into the heart of these message songs. On a couple of tracks, Young juxtaposes gentle, lilting acoustic-guitar rhythms with jarring, distorted harmonica lines. "Can't Stop Working," a stripped-down ode to Young's seemingly unstoppable work ethic, sounds like a demo from earlier works, making it clear that Young, 71, is favoring an unfettered folksy approach at this stage of his career. The result is an uneven, though personal statement closer to 1975's confessional *Tonight's the Night* than his more sentimental acoustic works.



Various Artists

The Life and Songs of Emmylou Harris

(Rounder)

Americana's elite pay tribute to the Queen of Heartache

In her four-decade career, Emmylou Harris' sterling voice and careful curation have earned her a baker's dozen of Grammys, a spot in the Country Music Hall of Fame, and a rightful place as one of the all-time music greats. To celebrate Harris's groundbreaking and storied career, Rounder recently released *The Life & Songs of Emmylou Harris: An All-Star Concert Celebration*, a 19-song CD/DVD combo (27 songs on the latter) of a live tribute concert to the Queen of Heartache.

The star power on the album alone is dizzying, with performances by Shawn Colvin, Sheryl Crow, Steve Earle, Vince Gill, Patty Griffin, Iron & Wine, Alison Krauss, Kris Kristofferson, Martina McBride, Buddy Miller, Conor Oberst, Mavis Staples, Lee Ann Womack, and others. Stand-out tracks include Harris' frequent musical partner Rodney Crowell singing an upbeat version of the drunkard's tale "You're Still on My Mind"; Lucinda Williams performing a deep, desolate version of "Hickory Wind" on her well-worn Gibson J-45, as the plaintive wail of Greg Leisz' pedal steel accompanies; and Harris herself performing a full-ensemble version of "Boulder to Birmingham" on her Gibson Jumbo J-200, a song she wrote for her longtime musical partner and mentor Gram Parsons, following his death in 1973. All the songs, many of which tackle Harris' familiar terrain of exquisite lament, are backed by a house band of veritable country greats, including Leisz, Buddy Miller, Don Was, Sam Bush, Audley Freed, Fred Eltringham, Matt Rollings, and Sara Watkins.

Fans of Harris and country music in general won't want to miss this sinewy, full-bodied, teary- and bleary-eyed musical homage.

—Anna Pulley



Adrian & Meredith

More Than A Little

(Vertigo)

Gypsy jazz, old-timey fiddle, and clog dancing color this rambunctious roots-music gem

Despite their disparate backgrounds—he's a punk-influenced proletarian folk singer, while she's an old-time fiddler and clog dancer—East Nashville couple Adrian and Meredith Krygowski get on like a house afire on their debut, *More Than a Little*. Adrian's spikey edges dovetail with Meredith's back porch sensibilities, resulting in a roughed-up Americana—an amalgam of gypsy punk, hardscrabble country, and jazz manouche swing—that wears its heart on a ragged sleeve. "It's a science, selling bullshit by the pound," Adrian rasps over the locomotive chug of his clawhammer-style acoustic guitar on the title track. Meredith's jittery fiddle darts in and out of swooning pedal steel, muted trumpet and incongruously jolly trombone as Adrian drawls a cynical takedown of business as usual in Music City.

The theme of Nashville as hard-edged factory town also imbues "Bank," where Meredith's whipcord fiddle wraps around Adrian's rattling, jangling acoustic, and "Fixer," which builds on trilling, back-tracking tenor banjo and Adrian's cutting jazz strum before unleashing a howling syncopated harmonica break by the Legendary Shack Shakers' JD Wilkes. But this collection is more than a rambunctious screed by roots-music upstarts biting the industry hand that feeds. Meredith's clog dancing raises a homespun racket on the plaintive, road weary confessional "Birthday Cakes," and Adrian's cyclical acoustic cocoons his deeply personal, regretful remembrance "Old Midwestern Home." Here Adrian and Meredith's wild ride settles down in a wind-swept grassy field and finds hard-won transcendence.

—Pat Moran

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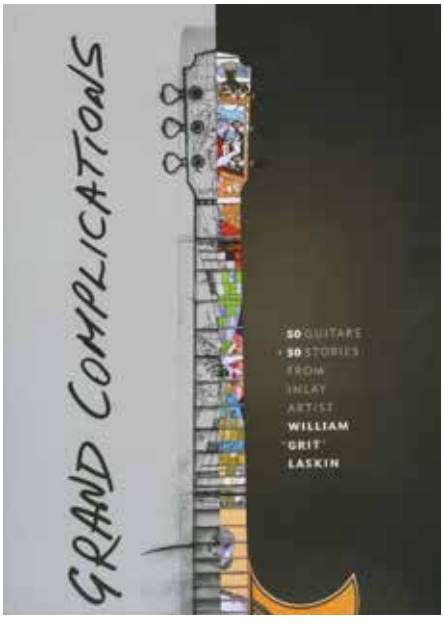
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William "Grit" Laskin's Beatles-themed inlay work





Grand Complications: 50 Guitars + 50 Stories from Inlay Artist William "Grit" Laskin
William "Grit" Laskin
(Figure 1 Publishing)

The Art of Guitar

'Grand Complications' is a look inside master luthier and inlay artist William 'Grit' Laskin's creative process

BY ANNA PULLEY

All artists—and acoustic guitarists especially—are storytellers at heart, and nowhere is this more true than the work of William "Grit" Laskin, a phenomenal luthier, musician, songwriter, and inlay wizard. In his new book, *Grand Complications: 50 Guitars + 50 Stories from Inlay Artist William "Grit" Laskin* (Figure 1 Publishing), Laskin shows (and tells) the stories behind 50 of his original designs, from 2003 to the present. Featured guitars include a paean to humpback whales, a deference to Picasso and Cubism, and even a tribute to the fall of the Berlin Wall, to name a few. Each of Laskin's masterworks is gorgeous to behold and stunning in its details, and the book goes into considerable depth about Laskin's creative process—the materials used, how the idea is shaped, techniques, and inspirations.

Laskin has been hand-building guitars for more than 45 years, for such icons as k.d. Lang, Stan Rogers, Jesse Cook, and Rik Emmett. Smaller headstock artworks are referred to as "Short Stories" in the book, whereas full narratives (novellas?) extend all the way down the neck. Some are cheeky, such as the coy Bettie Page guitar ("Bettie on Red") or the Bob Marley guitar, in which the smoke from Marley's joint cleverly unfurls down the fretboard, revealing the title, "This Machine Prevents Wars." Other works are more reverent, such as homages to John Lennon ("Imagine") and Louis Armstrong ("The Blue Trumpet").

Whether whimsical or somber, Laskin's craftmanship, research, and insights make for an inspiring read and a helluva coffee-table book. As Laskin thoughtfully describes it in the book's afterword, "At every moment of our lives, we are surrounded by stories. … Stories are what engage us. They are truly how we learn about and connect to the world."



The Martin Archives: A Scrapbook of Treasures from the World's Foremost Acoustic Guitar Maker
Jim Washburn & Dick Boak
(Hal Leonard)

A LITERAL TREASURE HUNT FOR MARTIN FANS

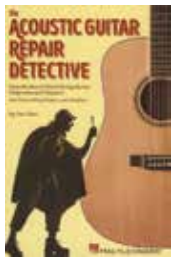
With more than two millions guitars made and 200 years of history under its belt, C.F. Martin & Co. has been around for a long time. To give you an idea of just how long, Martin guitars predate the typewriter, electric lights, and even the steam locomotive. As Graham Nash writes in the foreword, "The breadth and depth of the Martin archives is so vast that it can only be partially addressed in a book like this." To that end, documenting its history is a behemoth of a task, but authors Jim Washburn and Martin historian Dick Boak sure do have a lot of fun with it in *The Martin Archives: A Scrapbook of Treasures from the World's Foremost Acoustic Guitar Maker*. A compendium of many unseen Martin artifacts, company records, and stories from the pre-Civil War era to Woodstock to Coachella and beyond, *The Martin Archives* really *is* like a treasure hunt, literally stuffed to the gills with symposium posters, pockets of 1920s hang tags, ukulele postcards, pre-war catalogs, letters from stars such as Gene Autry and Jimmie Rodgers, the purchase order for the first D-45, promotional silk banners, and so much other ephemera. Martin fans will surely geek-out over all the goodies of yesteryear, and acoustic-guitar enthusiasts in general will marvel at the sheer depth and unique role Martin has played in America's musical culture. —*A.P.*



Fretboard PhD
Ashkan Mashhour
(Pele-Mele Works)

DON'T FRET: THIS GUITAR COURSE IS AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

Ah, the humble fretboard. Such a vital part of making the acoustic guitar sing, yet also easily overlooked. *Fretboard PhD: Master the Guitar Fretboard Through Intervals* aims to change that in a book that delivers precisely what it promises: an in-depth study of the fretboard with an emphasis on intervals. The "PhD" part of the title may sound daunting, and basic knowledge of music theory is a prerequisite to understanding this instructional book, but the hundreds of visual examples and diagrams included help to offset some of the more dense written material (a la linearity of inversion math formulae)! Topics covered in this course include an introduction to the fretboard, tunings, interval additions, fretboard geometry, harmonics, the CAGED system, anchoring, mirroring, transposition, and more. Written by Ashkan Mashhour, *Fretboard PhD* has its roots in lessons Mashhour took with guitarist Davis H. Murdy, who also coauthored his first book, *Intervallic Fretboard*. Though not for beginners, by the end of *Fretboard PhD*, most guitarists will have a comprehensive view of all things fretboard, from its physical layout to its properties, to ways to visualize and organize it in connection with overarching musical concepts. —*A.P.*



The Acoustic Guitar Repair Detective
Paul Neri
(Hal Leonard)

HOW TO SLEUTH REPAIR PROBLEMS

Have you ever wanted to be able to assess your acoustic guitar's problems without having to take it into the shop? *The Acoustic Guitar Repair Detective: Case Studies of Steel-String Guitar Diagnoses and Repairs* aims to arm players with knowledge of common guitar problems (as well as nylon-string guitars and ukuleles), including issues relating to adjustments, upkeep, and repair. Author Paul Neri knows his stuff. He's repaired more than 15,000 guitars, and has 35-plus years of experience fixing and restoring fretted instruments at Neri Lutherie in Connecticut. Make no mistake, Neri's not trying to put himself out of business or suggesting players attempt to tackle all their own repairs. Instead, *Repair Detective* offers a basic framework in which to approach a guitar's playability, as well as building an understanding, addressing common questions and myths, and preventing easily avoided problems, such as those relating to humidity, cracks, pickups, cleaning/polishing, intonation, how to buy a used guitar, and so on. Written in an easy to understand and colloquial manner, *Repair Detective* won't solve all your guitar problems in its 78 pages, but it will bolster players' understanding in addressing recurring issues, and includes dozens of illustrations, a comprehensive troubleshooting chart, and a glossary. —*A.P.*

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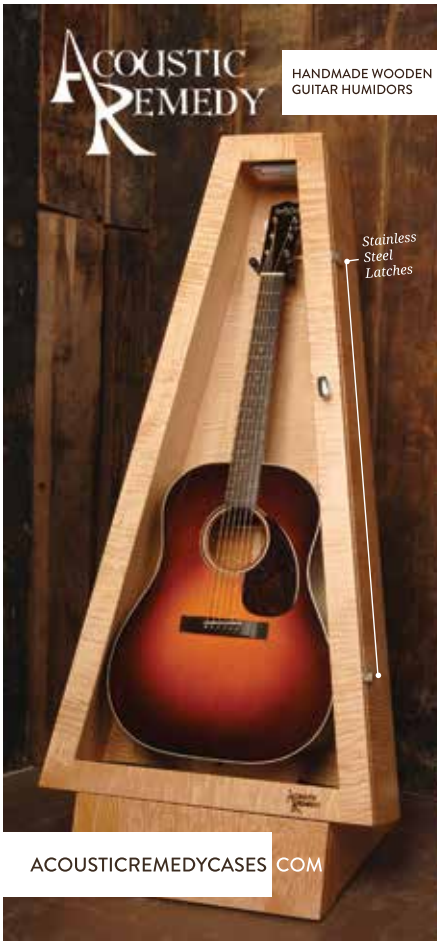


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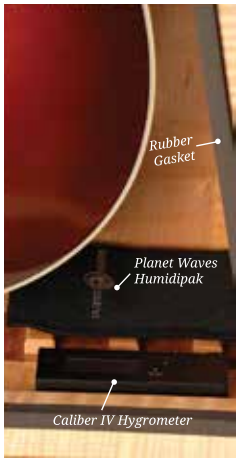
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COURTESY OF MARTIN GUITARS

Time Marches On

Martin turns to watchmaker to design its 2-millionth guitar

BY GREG CAHILL

It took C.F. Martin & Co. 121 years to produce its one-millionth guitar, and the company marked that milestone with a lavishly inlayed commemorative axe. It's taken just 12 years to reach the two-million mark. That landmark Martin features a D-45-style body, with a top crafted of highly-figured bearclaw Engelmann spruce, and back and sides constructed of Brazilian rosewood. The company turned to Roland G. Murphy of Pennsylvania-based RGM Watch Co. to help design the guitar's imaginative watch motif, replete with gears, inlays, and guilloché metal work, all of which lend a steam-punk flair to this one-of-a-kind acoustic. The headstock features a working clock and the tuning pegs are watch crowns (the winding adjuster). Now you have no excuse not to keep perfect time collectors can own a limited-edition D-200 Deluxe that reflects some of the same design elements.

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